THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 43

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MARCH 1995

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WIZARD®

Volume 1
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MARCH 1995

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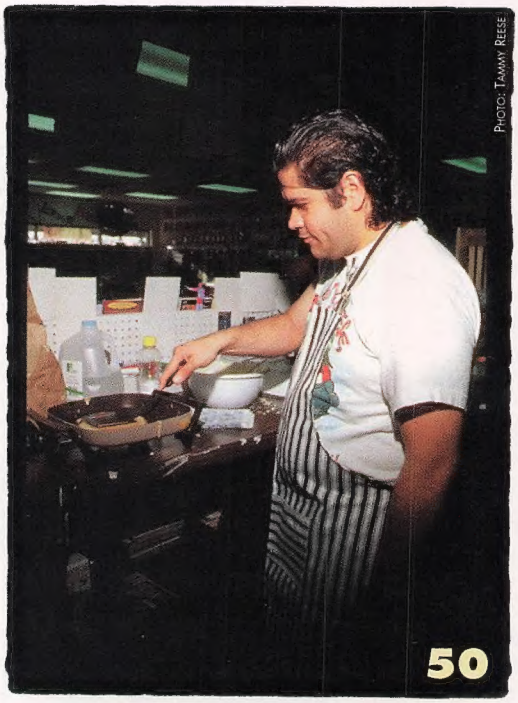

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WIN!

THE KICKIN'EST GAME AROUND—3DO!

Find out how on page 47!! Photo: V. Holland

editorial

COMIC ROMANCE

When I was growing up reading comics, I used to imagine how great it would be to actually live in the Marvel Universe. I mean, c'mon, how cool would it be to wait outside Avengers Mansion and get Cap's autograph, or visit the Baxter Building and watch Mr. Fantastic stretch? But, it being 'round Valentine's Day and all, I began to realize that it would really suck to live in a superhero universe, especially if you were lucky enough to be a mutant and have both superpowers and romantic intentions. C'mon, think about it, when was the last time a romance in comics had a happy ending? Like, never? Usually, the relationship ends with disaster in a way that can only happen in a world populated with Batmen and Spider-Men. The more I thought about it, the more I went back and checked through some recent (and some not-so-recent) back issues for some examples of soured relationships. What I found was that while some comic book romances have worked out OK (like Lois and Clark, Scott and Jean, and, hopefully one day, Fone Bone and Thorn), most relationships end in ways that would make Ricki Lake drool. I even made my very own list, which features some twists in ye old relationship department. And so, in no particular order, here we go:

1) Namor/Marrina

What kind of gal does royalty go for? Why, genetically-engineered alien lifeforms, designed to conquer worlds for their warlord masters, of course (but only if they've got killer bods). In this case, Namor gets hitched to Alpha Flight's Marrina, but when she eats some raw fish at a dinner party, it triggers her growth, and she becomes a 500-foot-long sea serpent on a murderous rampage (*that's* the reason I don't eat sushi). Subby ends up having to kill her with the Black Knight's Ebony Blade. (I think he jumped into a Quinjet instead of a Ford Bronco™, though.)

2) Spawn/Mrs. Spawn

This one's great. Al Simmons (in his pre-Spawn days) is betrayed and murdered by his bestest pal, and *en route* to the afterlife, makes a deal with Satan to return to Earth, which he does, but it's five years later, he's now a white guy, and his wife, Wanda, has remarried—one of his old friends (proof that you should always remember to read the fine print)! The icing on the cake is that he also finds out that he was sterile.

3) Hawkeye/Mockingbird

Hey, Satan's in this one too, but not 'til the end. Anyway, Hawk and Mockingbird meet on a mission, work well together, he goes partially deaf, and then they get hitched. Later, she lets a guy who tormented her die, Hawkeye gets real bent out of shape, they split up, get back together, and then Mephisto (Marvel's way of putting Satan in a book without calling him Satan) shows up and offs her. Bet they didn't see that one coming.

4) Daredevil/Elektra

I'm still not clear on this one, but here's what I think happened. Young Matt Murdock goes to college, he meets Elektra Natchios, they fall in love, her father gets murdered, she snaps, goes to study martial arts from this mysterious Mr. Miyagi guy, gets tricked into killing him, turns into a very bad person, goes to work as a hitperson for the Kingpin, runs into DD (Matt), old flames are rekindled, she dies, comes back to life, stars in a confusing mini-series by Frank Miller and Bill Sienkiewicz, dies, and comes back to life again, this time bald. Or something.

Whew. The list just goes on and on, with all sorts of wonderfully horrible endings to relationships. My final verdict: I'm glad we don't live in a superhero universe. Seeing as how it seems only girlfriends die in comics (except for Wonder Woman's beau Steve Trevor), we'd be stuck with a whole planet full of lonely guys in tights. And that would suck.

Happy Valentine's Day.

Adiós,

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Editor-in-Chief

mastHead

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FEBRUARY

1995

Magic Words

The Return of Doug

I remember the last time I wrote Magic Words. It must have been over a year ago (Douglas Goldstein here, now moved up in rank from mere typist to Production Director). I had just proven to everyone's satisfaction how Iron Man could single-handedly defeat all the X-Men, and I was getting kinda sick of reading everyone's theories on how so-and-so was the X-Traitor and it made sense for such-and-such a cockamamie reason. But then my job around these parts changed and I could no longer enjoy the glorious task of handling this letters page. Sigh.

Recently, Pat McCallum came to me and explained how Jumpin' Jim McLauchlin was going to be out of state doing an interview this month (That would be the Howard Chaykin interview in this very ish, on page 80.), and needed a replacement writer this month for Magic Words. What the hell, I thought, since Marvel hasn't touched upon its X-Traitor storyline in a while, we couldn't possibly still get letters on the subject, so I agreed. I hope I'm doing the right thing.

Hey, Wizards,

If Eddie Brock let one rip as Venom, would it just pass on through, dropping half the population of New York like flies, or would everybody catch the lethal protector with a big black bubble on his butt?

Levi Haske
Skandia, MI

So *these* are the kinds of letters we're getting nowadays, huh? I'd have to go with the bubble idea and hope it's just filled with gas.

Dear Wizard,

Why do comic characters age so slowly? I mean, look at heroes like Batman, Superman, and Spider-Man. Mr. Fantastic has had that gray strip on the sides of his hair since the comic came out! And look at Bruce Wayne's servant, Alfred. This guy should be a @*$%@ fossil by now!!

Chris Bissonette
Clifton Park, NY

Age is pretty weird in comics. Dick Grayson grew up, but Bruce Wayne stayed about the same age. Archie Andrews is the youngest 60-year-old I've ever seen. Maybe there's a reason for that. When Marvel put out a series where the lives of the characters progressed one month with each monthly issue, not too many people were interested. (Wonder how old those kids from *Wolfpack* are right now?)

Todd,

After reading the last two installments of your E.G.O. column (*Wizards* #39 & #40), I must admit I'm slightly perplexed. When the column first appeared, you treated readers to your ideas, expressions, and opinions, delivered with the twisted Toddy Bon Bast we've grown to know and love (or hate).

But I digress. The columns were designed to entertain us and, most importantly, to make us think. Lately, however, you've given us nothing but breakdowns

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on what is happening over at Todd McFarlane Productions, followed by a sundry list of all the other stuff and products you have in the works. Your column has become nothing more than an extension of the *Spawn* letters page, a free Todd McFarlane Productions advertisement, if you will. That would be like me writing a letter in response to an editorial, to a prominent industry fanzine, and then somehow twisting it around in order to blatantly trumpet the virtues of my new comic *Ash* (Event Comics), the second issue of which will be hitting the shelves any day now. It would be like me telling you about my character, who's a cool dude and has a fireman-actor ego, effectively making him a hero 24 hours a day. But you won't ever find me doing any sort of shameless self-promotion like that involving *Ash*, my new comic; that is, if you're really lucky you can still find a copy at your local retailer.

Anyway, in regards to your last couple of columns, I think you should change the name from E.G.O. (Everyone's Got Opinions) to P.L.U.G. (Penciler Limelights Upcoming Goods). Sounds perfect, don't ya think?

Joe Quesada
Event Comics

P.S.—Todd, *Spawn* looks great, but don't forget to pick up *Ash* at your local comic store! *Ash* is a really fun character who rides a really cool motorcycle. And Event Comics promises that *Ash* will be bimonthly (for the time being), and that we're going to try to keep the numbering consecutive for your collecting convenience.

Dear Wizard:

Why does everyone keep saying I suck? I rule! I kick ass! I'm the coolest superhero ever! Get it straight or I'll swing over there and smash your printing press!

The Spider-Clone
New York, NY

Why do you suck? Well, I'm not so sure people have anything against you personally. All else aside, you're even kinda interesting. What's bothering people about you is:

1. Your return means another long life-ruining storyline for ol' Spidey. Spider-Man is at his best when the book has a light-hearted feel, and the character doesn't really work if he's forced to be grim and gritty for the '90s, stuck in some dragged-out "myself and everyone I love is miserable so I want to die" plotline.

2. Marvel could have created a whole new storyline for the Spider-Man titles, but instead chose to revitalize a plot that was wrapped up years ago. In fact, this storyline doesn't even jive with continuity, as Reynaldo points out in the next letter.

Dear Wizard,

I admit to not buying all of the books containing the return of the Exile AKA Ben Reilly AKA "the Clone" (ugh), but there's something I believe everyone is forgetting. If you look back to the *Spectacular Spider-Man Annual* #8 and #149 of that same monthly book, you will see that the High Evolutionary discovered what Pete should have known since the '70s. Professor Miles Warren, though brilliant he might have been, was not advanced enough to perform instantaneous cloning. He made genetic viruses with the DNA of Peter Parker, Gwen Stacy, and himself. The purpose of these viruses was to transform someone on a cellular level to a near-duplicate of the original DNA patterns. These viruses were used on three totally innocent people to create Carrion, the Gwen Stacy clone, and Spidey's. In fact, in #149, it was revealed that Spidey's clone was actually Anthony Serba, the Prof's assistant.

Reynaldo Rubiera
New York, NY

The scary thing about that whole virus thing, is that those viruses might have been used more than three times, so there might actually be more than one Spider-Clone out there. In fact, for all we know, there might be 50 clones! Great, another *marvel*ous idea.

Dear Wizard,

Why do most of your artists or other artists draw their women with no clothes? Well, at least it looks like they're wearing a couple of mushroom caps and strings! I'm not trying to be mean or cruel. I like looking at my brother's *Wizards*, and I think they're neat. I hope you could answer my question someday and not take this letter personally.

Cheryl St. Denys
Genelle, British Columbia, Canada

With *no* clothes? What comics does your brother read?

I'll admit that many artists draw women superheroes with their costumes extra-skintight, but they also draw men in some pretty tight outfits as well. And I never hear any men complain that 9 out of 10 male superheroes seem to go to that same tailor.

Dear Wizard,

I'm 11 years old. For the past few years I've been watching TV. From all the commercials I've watched, one of them bugs me. It's that damn Trix™ rabbit. Will he get any of his own cereal? I actually feel sad for him and those kids he bugs. They should make the rabbit kill those damn kids.

Justin Mesina
Covina, CA

For Pete's sake, how many decades has that rabbit been trying to get a box of Trix™ when he *knows* he can't have any? If I were one of those kids, I would've skinned that damn bunny a long time ago.

Dear Whiners,

No, I am not referring to anyone at Wizard Press (at least, not yet...). I am

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender, and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words's address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Adriana Bryant
Age: 15 Sex: Female
4505 Waterbury Rd.
Raleigh, NC 27604

Likes: All X-titles, *The Maxx, Spawn*

Holly Thurston
Age: 15 Sex: Female
117 Sunrise Terrace
Spfld., MA 01119

Likes: All Image books, *WildC.A.T.s, Uncanny X-Men*

Jason Gaerlan
Age: 10 Sex: Male
76 Thompson Drive
Port Dover, Ont.
Canada NOA 1N4

Likes: *X-Men, Spawn, Spider-Man*

Tim Marks
Age: 25 Sex: Male
1010 A Magnolia Drive
Clearwater, FL 34616

Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, Ninja High School, Excalibur*

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talking to those of you out there who are part of this wonderful, *fictional* world of comics (if you need help: F-A-N-S).

I'd like to start my complaining by quoting from *Wizard* #37, from the Wizard Profile. This quotation came from Jim Salicrup, who responded to the question "Why do you read *Wizard*?" Mr. Salicrup replied by stating, "Because it's a magazine totally dedicated to the fun of being involved in comics."

OK, the key word I'm looking at here is FUN. These days, I have noticed a trend for comic fans to become nasty, irreverent, and brutally vocal about the industry and its professionals.

I would like, on behalf of the comic people everywhere, to argue in favor of the people who have been the industry "spittoons" for the past several years.

So what if your comic books are late? Why don't you go buy a real piece of literature and spend some time getting acquainted with what people are really interested in? There are worse things to become irate over (Rwanda? Cuba? Haiti? Bosnia?). Try finding something to voice your opinions over that will make people see that you actually do care where this world is going.

I'm not implying that if you read comics (or collect them) you are inferior; I just think that you shouldn't take it so seriously! This medium of combining art and storytelling was meant to be a fun (key word, again) opportunity to explore the imagination of something we always wanted to be or to do. This industry was not created for people to start complaining about shipping times, who writes better than who, which company has the best characters, who's the best, etc., etc.

I believe that "comicdom" has come to the point where people who actually read are far more interested in what they gain from a comic (i.e., value, and art, and story, and stuff) than what is put into it. Much talent is placed on the line to see if the "fanboys" will gobble it up and swallow, or just chew and spit it out. This means that once-excellent comics (here I am thinking of *Superman*) have become simple formats for splash pages, gimmick covers, gimmick storylines, and hyped-up advertisements for lousy stories.

Bryan O'Donnell
Switzerland

Bryan went on for another few pages or so (apparently the Swiss, while neutral, are easily riled up), but we get the point. A lot of fans have definitely lost sight of what they're actually supposed to be enjoying. However, I won't get into the financial dangers that late comics pose to our poor store owners. Speaking of which...

Dear Wizard,

What's going on here? I was sitting reading my *Wizard* #36 when something struck me. In the July "Picks" section, you have *Doom's IV* #1 by Image. Then in the "Top 100...what was hot 1 year ago" area, I saw *Doom's IV* #1 by Image again. Which is which?

Robert West
Clinton, MD

Same book. Those "what was hot" lists are based off of orders from stores, not what was actually shipped and sold. *Doom's IV* #1 was on order one year ago. It actually saw print a few months ago.

Dear Magic Words,

Does Cyclops still have eyelids?

Nicholas Hutniak
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

His eyelids are impervious to his blasts, but if he's got his eyes shut real tight and he concentrates really hard, he can blow the back of his head clean off.

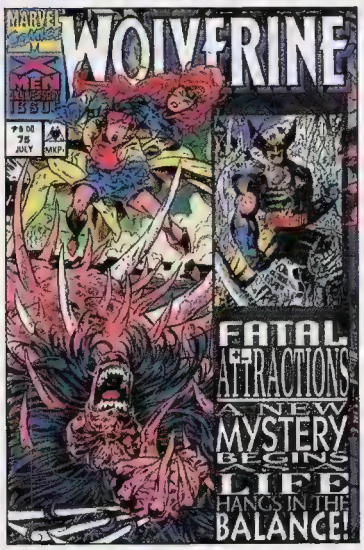
Dear Magic Words,

What happened to your Tip Sheet?

In *Wizard* #37, there wasn't one!

Luke Finkle
Middle Grove, NY

The Tip Sheet was a card that we bound into the book which we were able to print later than the price guide, which let us give even more up-to-date info than before. After juggling some schedules around, we were able to close the price guide later each month, so the Tip Sheet was canned. It may, however, see a return if we can think of some nifty stuff to add to it. Maybe a scratch n' sniff section for prices that have risen or fallen. Hmm...



Dear Wizard,

All I want to know is "Does Marvel know about the things that some Filipino is doing?" Someone is turning their comic book into Tagalog with cheap paper in it, including an advertisement about a rice dealer here, even a raffle that whoever won shall get 10,000 pesos every end of the month, and a chance to win one million pesos in June 1995. It's so stupid.

Eric Dionsio
Angeles City, Philippines

What Eric sent over is a black-and-white copy of *Wolverine* #75 with the dialogue redone in Tagalog—the principle language of the Philippines—that's been printed with, well, below-average standards. It does make one wonder if this is really authorized by Marvel like the editor of the magazine states. But I would imagine it is, since Marvel has always been protective of its license, and I'm sure they'd have known about an unauthorized comic. (The rice advertiser certainly didn't get *our* permission before stealing our motto, "The best rice at the best price.") By the way, what's one million pesos worth in American currency? Seven dollars or something?

Dear Wizard,

If I subscribe to *Wizard*, do I get all the free stuff like the ones from the store?

Edgar Gallardo
Joliet, IL

Of course. Subscribers even get a free cube of sausage. Or at least they used to.

Dear Wizard staff:

The other day I picked out one of my comics to read again. It was a 1977 *Incredible Hulk* that still had a sheen on the cover and excellent color. Although the story was a little lame, the advertisements in it really humored me. I was about eight years old when the comic was made, and became a devoted comic collector about that time. I remember dreaming about owning those neat gadgets on what I call the "scrambletisements." I remember wanting to sell *Grit*, the newspaper, to make more dough for comics; I even remember the shoe advertisement by O.J. Simpson (boots, too!).

Didn't everybody want everything on the illustrated *Star Wars* item page? Or how about a Twinkie™ or Hostess Cup Cake™? Those Hostess™ ads were the best! Ask my wife—I still have some Hostess Cakes™ on my gut from 1977!

Well, in celebration of an undying and ingenious food group, I thought I should try to dig up the essence of these ads and expose them to the public again. So, go out and get a box of Hostess™ and read the old issues you used to love. Eat the whole box—I believe that preservatives are good for you! Don't coroners do the same thing to us after we've had our last King Dong™ anyway? *Bon appétit!*

Michael Lemane
Ramsey, NJ

How does Spider-Man stop the Absorbing Man? By distracting him with a Twinkie™, of course! (That's a biiiig Twinkie™.)

Dear Wizard,

Is the zebra black with white stripes or white with black stripes?

Yamithliz Rivas Maymi
Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico

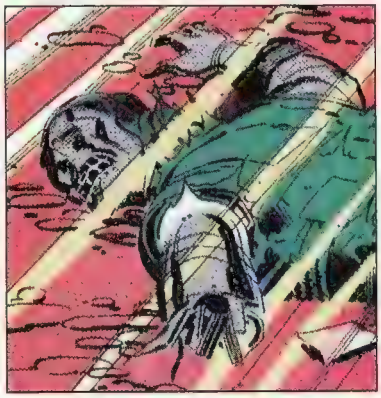
Those aren't stripes. The whole body of a zebra is a linticular animation picture. Next time you're at a zoo, grab a zebra by the head and shake, then watch the action begin.

Dear Wizard,

Canadian comic prices...why are they always being raised? I know they are being shipped here from the States, but why should we pay $3.50, when before we were paying $3.15 for the same #@%#!!#% book and quality we expect paper-wise, along with a good story and art. If you set a price, it should be kept that way unless we get better paper or things like that. Don't do it just to milk another quarter or dime or whatnot out of us, the fans. Take a look at *Spawn/Batman* and *Batman/Spawn*. We sorry readers actually paid $6.70 and $5.35 for both books. So please, if anything, please lower prices instead of raising them.

James Wright
Paris, Ontario, Canada

Seems we've got an uppity Canadian on our hands here. Canadian prices are set by the exchange rates between the American and Canadian dollar, so you're actually paying the same amount. There's a bonus for Canadians, though. A lot of Canadian comic book stores don't bother to redo the price guides they get, and instead, they accept the values listed as Canadian dollars. So, you're actually buying your back issues cheaper than you could in the States.



Dear Wizard,

Who would win if Darth Vader fought Doctor Doom?

Nathan Kuruna
Middleburg, PA

Is that before or after the Energizer Bunny™ beat up Darth? (Jeez, what the Dark Lord of the Sith

Mike Henderson Age: 13 Sex: Male 11148 Stanley Road Flushing, MI 48433 Likes: X-titles, *Ren and Stimpy, Avengers*	Jeff Barker Age: 14 Sex: Male 422 Pine Ottawa, KS 66067 Likes: *Spawn, X-O Manowar, Solar*	Jeff SanGabriel Age: 16 Sex: Male 733 Estancia Way San Rafael, CA 94903-3025 Likes: *Pitt, WildStar, Adventures of Superman*	Casey Christiansen Age: 19 Sex: Male P.O. Box 79 Moreland, Idaho 83256 Likes: *Spawn, Savage Dragon, Pitt*	John Graziano Age: 13 Sex: Male 64 Spring Street Wakefield, MA 01880 Likes: *X-Men, Youngblood, Venom*	Juan "Iceman" Capder Age: 13 Sex: Male 10644 Alabama Ave. Chatsworth, CA 91311 Likes: X-titles, *Magnus, Darker Image*	Mark Weisler Age: 32 Sex: Male 78-03 101 Avenue Ozone Park, NY 11416-1917 Likes: *X-Men, Ghost Rider, Lobo*	Nathan Fischer Age: 19 Sex: Male 1208 Guidford Ct. Iowa City, IA 52240 Likes: *Sandman, House of Secrets, Master of Kung Fu*

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BART IS BACK!
X-O
MANOWAR
IN MARCH
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Ask the WIZARD

Q: Has Superman ever appeared on the cover of any issue of *Wizard*?
—W. McMurry, Roseland, VA

A: That would be a definite no, although the big "S" did make appearances on the covers of our *Superman* and *Zero Hour* Specials. But if we get enough fan response (hint hint), he just might sneak in there one day.

Q: If the Enterprise is flying through space, why is there gravity on the ship?
—C. Davis, Olive Bridge, NY

A: Well, those wacky Trek fiends created this thing called artificial gravity. You kinda need it to zip around space without boppin' your noggin.

Q: How do you pronounce adamantium?
—C. Mastrovito, Camarillo, CA

A: Adamantium.

Q: Is Lord Emp tall enough to get onto roller coasters?
—J. Buurma, Summit, NJ

A: Well, seeing as how this WildC.A.T.s member is only 3-foot-6, and most roller coasters have a cut-off of about 4 feet, we'd have to say no. But he can always go play on the bumper cars.

Q: So, where in the world is Carmen Sandiego, anyways?
—J. C. King, Birmingham, AL

A: With Waldo, of course.

Ask the Pros

Hey, Mark Waid...
"When are you going to start writing *Captain America*?"
—D. Gargano, Binghamton, NY

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

won't do for a dollar.) My bet would still have to be on Vader, on the coolness factor alone.

Dear Wizard,

I just got done reading *Zero Hour* #0, and throughout most of the book, all I saw was the color green. Can somebody please explain to me why DC is so hung up on the color green?

Jason Munski
Lancaster, CA

Actually, if you read that book while wearing Valiant Vision glasses, and hit yourself on the head with a dead chipmunk, you'll be able to play Game Boy™ in color.

Dear Wizard,

I am kind of new at collecting comics. How do you know if a comic is going to be worth something, so you can buy it at a cheap price?

Russ Warden
Winterville, GA

Well, I know a comic will be worth a lot to me if it's about a character I'm interested in and the storyline is worth reading. There are a couple of writers and artists who, if they work on a particular book, I'd be inclined to buy it, because I enjoy their style. For instance, if Neil Gaiman wrote an Iron Man story and George Pérez drew it, that comic would be worth a great deal to me. I would certainly pick it up for cover price when it came out.

Dear Wizard,

How big is the universe?

How many different flavors are there in one bag of Skittles™?

Jimmy Bagwell
Memphis, TN

Our telescopes can only observe the visible light they receive from outer space. Under the accepted theory, space has been constantly expanding since the Big Bang (six or eight billion years ago). We'll never receive the light being given off at the far side, so we'll never know how many flavors of Skittles™ there are. As for your other question, the universe is really big.

Wizard,

Duh, McFly, are you people crazy or what? I can't understand how in the world you guys could pick Lobo over Wolverine [in the Slugfests article in *Wizard* #39]. Just because Lobo killed everyone on his planet and hung in with Superman doesn't mean diddly. I know DC tried, but Lobo isn't anything but a cheap rip-off of Wolverine. Lobo tries his hardest to be like the original Wolvie, but when it comes right down to it, he's just a boy trying to fill a man's shoes. Wolverine wouldn't even have to be pissed, and he would tear Lobo apart,

and then pick Lobo's flesh off his teeth with his claws.

Chris Hawkins
Shawnee, OK

Lobo beating up Superman doesn't matter? Are we talking about the same Superman? While we're talking about beating up people, I seem to remember that Lobo beat up all the gods and angels. By himself. When he was dead. If that doesn't make him the top contender to the female, midget, heavyweight wrestling title, I don't know what does.

Dear Wizard People,

Couple days ago, I was over at my friend's house when his cousin came over. She had something with her. Before I knew it, we were being forced to watch *Bambi* with her. BORING! Well, in the credits, when Supervising Animators came up, I noticed a familiar name. Eric Larson. Could it be that the guy who draws Savage Dragon used to draw Bambi?

Adam Minjares
Antioch, CA

Nope.

Dear Wizard,

Can you imagine a *Star Wars/Star Trek* crossover? A lost Star Destroyer drifts to the Milky Way over a span of a few billion years, or whatever, and the Enterprise finds it with a frozen body in it that turns out to be the Emperor, who thaws out and, after ages of cryogenic sleep, wakes up and wreaks havoc on the Federation. The Emperor takes the Borg ship and turns it into a mini-Death Star and threatens to blow Earth up.

Well, maybe not!

Robert Balderson
Southfied, MI

Maybe not.

Wizard,

If Professor X is killed 20 years before he founds the X-Men, then why keep the "X"? Most of the new titles Marvel has

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CREATED BY GARTH ENNIS • STEVE DILLON

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Join a young Texas minister with an unholy power, a woman who wants to be a killer, and a vampire drunk on blood and whiskey — for the wildest, darkest, fastest ride of your life.

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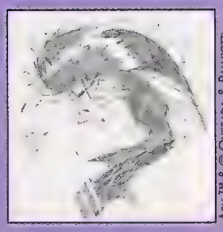


ASH ™ & © QUESADA & PALMIOTTI

When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and *boom*, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your envelope gets printed, you'll become a household name and start dating the likes of Emma Thompson and Kenneth Branagh (or both, if you like). Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive an *Amazing Spider-Man* #394 signed by Mark Bagley, an *Extreme Super Tour Book* signed by a billion Extreme guys, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a stylin' *Wizard* T-shirt! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original framed Joe Quesada sketch of the hot-blooded Ash. Thanks for the spiffy art, Joe! Artists: please include a clearly printed return address on the back of your envelope.

WONDER WOMAN ™ & © DC COMICS

Nelson W. Knapp
Duquoin, IL

CYCLOPS, WOLVERINE, & PSYLOCKE ™ & © MARVEL

Arne Ratermanis
San Diego, CA

GHOST RIDER ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Kevin Devries
Omaha, NE

SANDMAN ™ & © DC COMICS

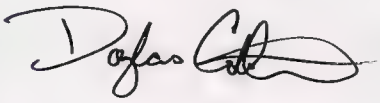
Shaun Jennings
Norfolk, England

come out with have an "X" in them. I mean, if you want to kill him off so neatly then let the ex-professor rest in peace.

Alecz Stamos
Hudson, FL

Actually, the "X" in "X-Men" doesn't refer to Professor X. All of the mutants running around today are the "children of the atom," meaning that they have genetic mutations from all sorts of radiation that's been floating around the world. The "X" refers to the one mutant gene that gives them their powers. Don't try this at home, though. Putting your hamster in the microwave won't give him super-hamster powers, it'll just make the inside of the microwave sticky.

Well, kids, it's certainly been fun heading back to the ol' stompin' ground. Why, I'm just flooded with memories of old. And I'm also flooded with those same damn letters from readers with their theories on the X-Traitor. Sigh. Some things never change. And as for all you freaks who asked, "How do they cram all that gram into Golden Grahams™," keep your eyes peeled and keep reading *Wizard*, 'cause we're planning on eventually running a full feature on just that. Anyway, keep those letters coming and, if in the future, I actually get the urge to do this column once again...well, I just might have to go bust Jim's kneecaps.



Douglas Goldstein, still in pain over Kirk's death and the Republicans' return to power, is running back to his desk before he gets hurt again.

HEY!

For some reason, we're not getting too much mail regarding the features we run (you know, the interviews and stuff). Now, how can we know what you folks wanna see if you don't tell us what's good and what's crap? So c'mon, be a pal and take five minutes to let us know how we're doin'.

Thanks.

Send your letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

S H I P P I N G I N A P R I L

HARRIS COMICS

FROM THE PAGES OF VAMPIRELLA

HYDE-25 #0

Sniegoski/Webb/BUZZ/Jones

COVER BY FLINT HENRY

BISHOP, from Vengeance of Vampirella #9 &10, strikes out on his own against the twisted mayhem created by the mutagenic drug, HYDE-25.

ALSO IN ISSUE:
Coupon 2 of 2 for a free VAMPIRELLA/HYDE-25 11"X17" full color poster by BUZZ!
(Coupon 1 appears in Vengeance of Vampirella #10)

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SPECIAL BONUS: VAMPIRELLA
Hyde-25 #0 will feature the first ever Vampirella story, "*Vampirella of Drakulon*," by Forrest Ackerman & Tom Sutton.
IN COLOR!

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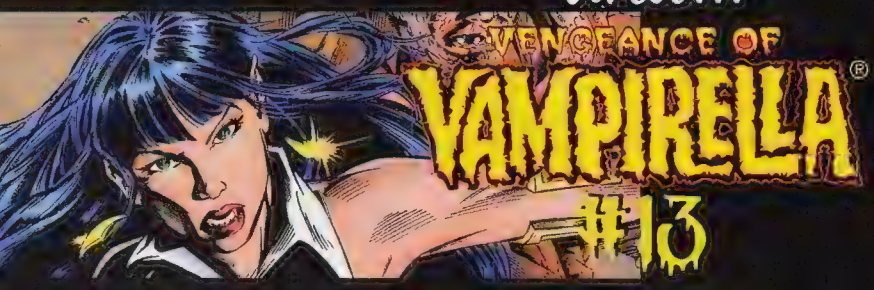

PASSION PLAY ACT TWO

Sniegoski•Van Wormer•Weems
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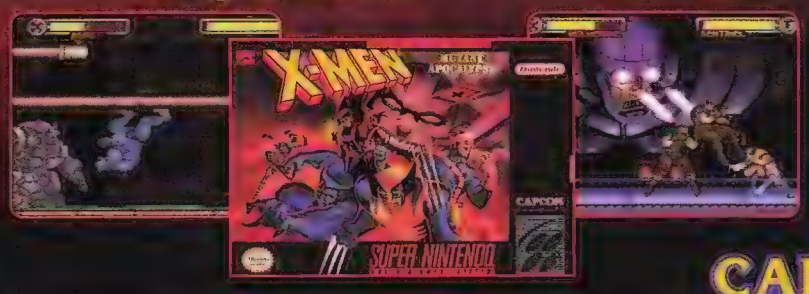
YOU'VE JUST BEEN DEALT A KILLER HAND.



MARVEL COMICS

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WIZARD NEWS
Compiled by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

MAGIC: THE GATHERING
The Comic Book

In a major licensing agreement, **Acclaim Comics** (formerly known as Voyager Communications) has obtained exclusive rights to create comic books based on the hit trading card game ***Magic: The Gathering***.

Acclaim will publish two monthly series, *Magic: The Gathering—The Shadow Mage* and *Ice Age—A Magic: The Gathering Mini-Series*. Both titles will begin in March as the first titles in Acclaim's Armada imprint, which will handle Acclaim's licensed titles.

Both titles will be written by Jeff Gómez, an editor at Acclaim who formerly published *Gateways*, a nationally distributed gaming magazine. "He is from the gaming community," commented Acclaim marketing vice-president Marty Stever. *Shadow Mage* will be penciled and inked by industry veteran **Val Mayerik**, who will also supply painted covers. *Ice Age* will be penciled by **Rafael Kayanan** (*Conan the Adventurer*) and inked by Rodney Ramos. Painted covers will come from **Charles Vess** (*Sandman*).

"The main book is a series of mini-series," said Stever, "following a few characters. When you're playing *Magic*, you play the part of a planewalker, a spellcaster so powerful he can traverse time and space. This is the story of a kid who grows up to be a planewalker—as he grows up and learns how to use magic."

"*Magic: The Gathering* is an international phenomenon," said **Steve Massarsky**, Acclaim publisher. "To date, more than 500 million cards have been sold worldwide."

Magic: The Gathering is a tremendously popular fantasy adventure game from Wizards of the Coast that allows players to use their imaginations to simulate a battle between wizards. Through the use of creatures, artifacts, enchantments, and spells printed on tradable cards, players can build a deck from a pool of approximately 900 cards. *Shadow Mage* and *Ice Age* will each incorporate the *Magic: The Gathering* game system into each storyline, including spells and spell combinations.

Acclaim Comics Inc. was established as part of the recent acquisition of Voyager Communications Inc. and its Valiant Comics line by Acclaim Entertainment Inc.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

HURLOON MINOTAUR ™ & © WIZARDS OF THE COAST

The Hurloon Minotaur graces the cover to Magic: The Gathering*—the comic book.*

THOR visits MALIBU

The **Ultraverse** is about to get hammered. As first reported in *Wizard* #42, the first visible sign of Marvel Comics's acquisition of Malibu Comics will be the integral role of Marvel's Mighty **Thor** in the California comic company's current ***Godwheel*** mini-series, on sale throughout January. Additionally, Malibu offered tantalizing hints that a major Marvel villain would also cross over into the Ultraverse for the event, and a prestigious creator would help realize the party. Yet, until now, the goings on planned for the event have been one of comics' best-kept secrets.

"There's not much mystery left in comics," notes Malibu's creative director **Tom Mason**. "We wanted to bring some of the fun and mystery back to reading comics when we did *Godwheel*, so we kept our guest appearances quiet."

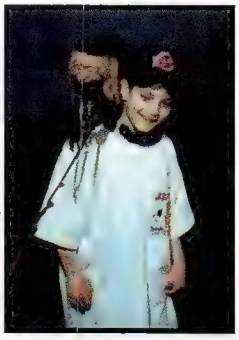
Now, all can be revealed. "We can't be quiet anymore," claims Ultraverse line editor and *Godwheel* editor Dan Danko. "Thor will be in *Godwheel*, and industry powerhouse **George Pérez** will be drawing

THOR CONTINUES ON PAGE 20

PHOTO: BY AL ORTEGA

X-O ™ & © VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS

"Ho, good skin! We're only giving this guy the Heimlich—settle down!" shouted Aric to the frisky Good Skin at local show.



MONKEY ™ & © GOD, THE CHILD IS A WARD OF THE STATE.

Flying monkey seen carrying dead kid. "Hey, that's a dead kid with a flying monkey," screamed onlookers.

SPACE GHOST ™ & © HANNA-BARBERA

"Not in the face! Not in the FACE!" yelled doomed fan after Space Ghost's bar-hopping binge with the Herculoids.

THOR CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

the Thor segment of the mini-series. What's more, Thor is bringing **Loki** with him to the Ultraverse." Long-time fans will note Pérez's return to drawing Thor harks back to days past when Pérez drew the character in *Avengers*.

What's more, it looks like Loki won't be stirring up any more trouble for Asgard in the immediate future. It seems that villains like NecroMantra, Primevil, and Lord Pumpkin will appeal to the demigod. Danko further reveals, "Loki will be staying [in the Ultraverse]."

In other crossover news, Marvel's **Silver Surfer** and Malibu's **Rune** will be co-starring in their own 48-page one-shot flip-book in April, with guest appearances by Marvel's **Adam Warlock** and the **Infinity Watch**. With one side drawn by **John Buscema** and the other by **Flint Henry**, the book sports a cover by **Barry Windsor-Smith**, while a writer has yet to be announced. This issue heralds a relaunch of Marvel's Cosmic Powers line of titles in April, as well as a new Rune series by **Chris Ulm** and **Kyle Hotz** in May. Tom Mason says that after this one-shot, readers can expect Warlock and the Infinity Watch (along with the Infinity Gems) to remain in the Ultraverse, as well as some of Rune's starstones appearing in the Marvel Universe.

—Hank Bordowitz & John B. Lacey

Thor in the Ultraverse??? What's next—the Silver Surfer teamin' up with Rune?

DC Releases ALEX ROSS Art

On the heels of *Wizard* #42's announcement of ***Kingdom Come***, an Elseworlds mini-series by **Mark Waid** and **Alex Ross**, DC has released some artwork by Ross.

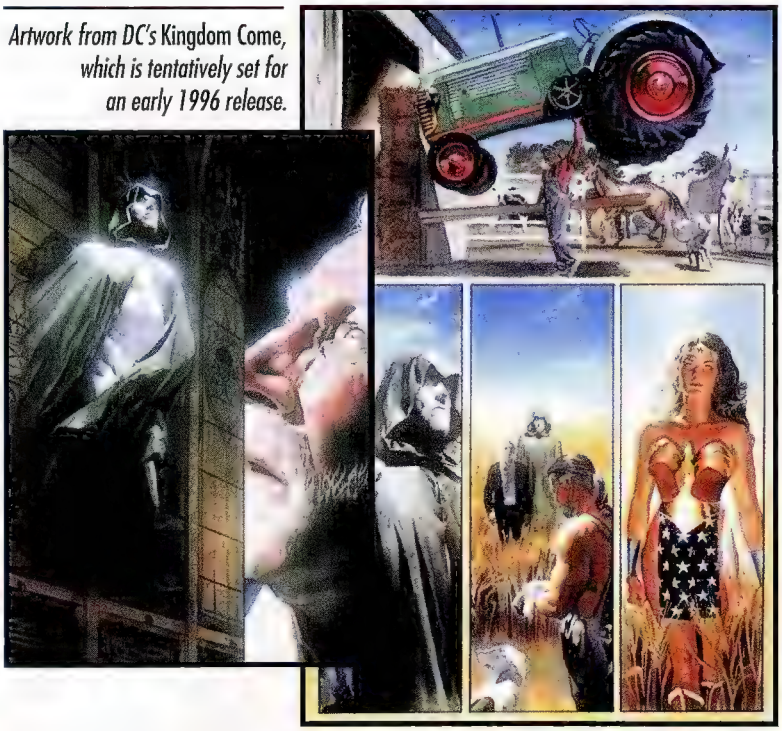
"The first pages have come in and they're absolutely stunning," commented **Paul Levitz**, DC's executive VP and publisher. "Mark and Alex are taking our classic characters and exploring exciting new territory with them."

Kingdom Come will explore a possible future of the DC Universe, with both old and new characters; the more recognizable characters will feature new designs by Ross.

The series is tentatively scheduled for an early 1996 release.

—John B. Lacey

Artwork from DC's Kingdom Come, *which is tentatively set for an early 1996 release.*



Crossing Over a WILDSTORM

In May, Image Comics's **WildStorm Productions** will host a massive 13-part crossover pitting the **WildC.A.T.s** and **StormWatch** teams against the world's most powerful Daemonites, kicking off in May.

The tentatively titled ***"WildStorm Crossover"*** promises thrilling action and a stunning finale that will help launch the new monthly ***Grifter*** series.

According to WildStorm Productions marketing director Jeff Mariotte, fans have been requesting a crossover for about two years.

"We've got all these books that are interrelated in terms of backstory," he said, "but this is the first time that we've really pulled out the stops and said, 'Let's unify all this.'"

All the regular May titles will be hijacked by writing trio **James Robinson**, **Ron Marz**, and **Steve Seagle**, who will each script a 75-page chunk of the story.

"We felt that they were three of the best writers in the business and three people who knew our characters really well," explained Mariotte.

Grifter #1 will be the first issue of a new ongoing series to be written by Seagle. (No artist was announced at press time.) Seagle hopes *Grifter* will be "America's favorite cynical-go-lucky, as opposed to happy-go-lucky" comic. Despite his personal taste for campy '60s spy movies, Seagle said *Grifter* will have the grim edge favored by Image fans: "The trick is keeping the action coefficient up, while really rounding out that character to make him interesting to people."

As a special bonus, **Barry Windsor-Smith** will illustrate Robinson's *WildStorm* #1, one of the two "bookends" to the crossover.

"I've been looking for an opportunity to work with the guys at Image. Then this marvelous chance came along to create a story that involved two of Jim Lee's best teams," said Windsor-Smith.

The closing bookend, *WildStorm* #2, will be written by Marz, with an artist to be announced.

—Buddy Scalera

THOR ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. ALL ULTRAVERSE CHARACTERS ™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT INC. ALL DC CHARACTERS ™ & © DC COMICS.

JURGENS: From SUPERMAN to SOLAR

Dan Jurgens is turning in his art reins on the Man of Steel in favor of the Man of the Atom, as he will be taking over both the writing and art chores on ***Solar: Man of the Atom*** with #46, in March.

So, where does that leave Jurgens's other major assignment, DC's ***Superman***? Jurgens reports that *Superman* #100 (also due in March) will be the last issue he pencils, although he will continue to write the adventures of the Man of Steel.

"I've been on *Superman* a long time, and after a time like that and some of the high points we've had, you just start feeling the itch to do something different," Jurgens said, explaining the shift. "I've been looking for a new challenge for the last couple of months."

Given the number of offers Jurgens must have entertained (it was rumored he was offered ***Captain America*** by Marvel), why did he go with Valiant's atomic-powered hero? "When you're in this business, one of the things you run up against is that Marvel and DC are both very big companies," he said. "They have a very strict separation between the guys who write and draw the books and the editorial powers-that-be. A company like Valiant is a much smaller place and there's much more of a cooperative atmosphere for everybody and a bigger chance to make a difference."

Jurgens says the psychological differences between the men of steel and the atom will keep him from repeating themes he has already explored at DC.

"Superman is probably the most stable hero in comics; Solar is somewhat schizoid," he pointed out. "Superman has a great understanding of his powers, capabilities, and responsibilities; I don't think Solar—[AKA] Phil Seleski—does.

Solar ™ & © Western Publishing

Move over, Earth—Jurgens is doin' Solar.

"For people to want to read *Solar*, he has to become a more likable character," Jurgens continued. "Before that happens, he has to solve a lot of his problems, so we will deal with that front and center for the first couple of issues. This time, his reluctance to accept what he is manifests itself in some new directions. There will be an entirely new world and new Earth where we find Solar suddenly; this will introduce to Valiant a bunch of new characters and new possible story directions."

The naming of Jurgens to handle *Solar* comes on the heels of Acclaim Comics's announcement of the big changes in the Valiant line and this month's news of the acquisition of the *Magic: The Gathering* license for the Armada imprint.

Now that Acclaim has announced its creator-owned line, Windjammer, Jurgens said contributing in that capacity is "always a possibility," but his long-awaited project *Deuce*—once announced as a Bravura project at Malibu—will be published by Image, "largely because I agreed to do it there before this whole situation with Valiant came up," he said. "I'm shooting for late summer of '95."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

MARVELUTION Rolls On: Davis and Chichester Leave Books

Marvel writer/artist **Alan Davis** is resigning from *The ClanDestine* and writer **D.G. Chichester** was removed from *Daredevil* as part of the "Marvelution" reorganization, *Wizard* has learned.

While no official announcement has been made by Marvel, Davis and Chichester confirmed the moves.

"With *The ClanDestine*," stated Davis, "I had hoped to produce my ideal of a superhero book, an old-fashioned comic with the emphasis on character, story, and fun. Unfortunately, after a year of very hard work that has been punctuated by a number of false starts, delays, and confusion caused by radical changes at Marvel and within the industry, I must admit defeat." Issue #8 will be his last.

"In Marvel's restructuring," explained Chichester, "a lot of titles were moved around to different editors and to different groups. *Daredevil* went from **Ralph Macchio**, who'd had it for 10 years, to **Bobbie Chase**'s group, with **Marie Javins** being the direct editor on the book. I've known Marie since she was my intern. I had absolutely no problem with her as my editor. However, while Marie was on vacation, Bobbie Chase sought out another writer [reportedly, *Amazing Spider-Man* scribe **J.M. DeMatteis**] for the book, and I was gone."

Regular *DD* artist **Scott McDaniel** has accepted other opportunities, and, according to new *Daredevil* editor Marie Javins, **Ron Wagner** is the new penciler.

"I respect D.G. Chichester's work and creativity," stated Javins. However, she stipulated she was not speaking as a representative of Marvel, but rather from personal feelings. "He was completely dedicated to the book and the character. I think the old editorial team was happy with the direction [*Daredevil*] was taking, and the new editorial team wanted a different direction. Unfortunately, we had to act quickly and didn't take the team into consideration as much as we might have."

Chichester confirmed that he'll do the out-of-continuity Daredevil series called *Original Sin* (scheduled for summer release, which sees Matt Murdock thrown back to 1865 New York), but is not too interested in returning to the monthly *Daredevil* book, yet. "We'd have to talk some serious deal-making before I came back to the book," he stated. "If there was a position where Marvel wanted me to write it regularly, there would be certain things that I would ask for in writing, just to ensure that I wouldn't get this second-rate treatment again."

Alan Davis, on the other hand, received a lot of input. "The advice I've been given by Marvel's representatives ranged from 'Yes, we know the coloring isn't very good and 10 percent of the fine lines have vanished due to the separators' incompetence, but the readers never notice' to 'You work too hard; your expectations are too high.'

"I don't believe *The ClanDestine* has been given or can expect the necessary support to compete with similarly priced titles," Davis concluded.

On October 17, Marvel announced a radical reorganization of its editorial department and line-up into four distinct character-driven comic groups. Referring to it as "Marvelution," **Terry Stewart**, president and COO of Marvel Comics, promised, "We'll be making a steady stream of announcements, filling in the details as they develop, and we'll be communicating them to the industry and our fans through publications."

Marvel had no official comment regarding either Davis or Chichester.

—Ruth Morrison

DC Replaces ISABELLA

DC Comics and **Tony Isabella** have both announced that the veteran comics writer has been let go as writer of the ongoing ***Black Lightning*** series, featuring the title character Isabella created two decades ago and recently updated for the 1990s. The announcement came even before the first issue of the new series was released in late December.

Isabella said he was a full four months ahead of schedule on his writing, and that the first nine issues of the series will feature his scripts.

Isabella's final monthly issue of *Black Lightning* is scheduled to ship in August. Beginning with #10, the series will be written by Australian native and resident **David deVries**, who is currently completing a run on *The Phantom* for Marvel. Artist **Eddy Newell** reportedly has a 12-issue commitment to the title, which he expects to fulfill.

Neither Isabella nor *Black Lightning* editor **Pat Garrahy** would explain the reasons for the parting of ways.

"The reasons were unjust—and it's not something I'm looking to discuss," Isabella told *Wizard*. "The *Black Lightning* project was nurtured by some wonderful editorial talent, all of whom supported the vision of a deeply moral, deeply religious superhero. It's just unfortunate that the book ultimately ended up in the hands of an editor who just did not share—or seem to even understand—the vision that Eddy Newell and I brought to the book."

BLACK LIGHTNING ™ & © DC COMICS

For his part, Garrahy had nothing but praise for Isabella's work on *Black Lightning*. "Tony's work on the series was brilliant; it's probably the finest work he's ever done. It's really a shame to see him leave the series, but I really have no comment as to why he was asked to leave," Garrahy said.

"The book will continue in the tradition that Tony has established. This is a gritty, street-side superhero, someone who battles with a moral judgment of what he does day to day. We plan on taking the book in the direction Tony established and progressing the character."

Asked if an Australian could be up to the task of writing about the American urban environment, Garrahy responded, "Is it the same as having a white, middle-class, mid-American like Tony Isabella writing a black superhero? Dave's a talented writer who does his research; he's taking the character and crawling inside his head and exploring the opportunities that are open to him."

As to Isabella's charges about possible creative differences: "At no point did Tony's dismissal come to a conflict of creative interests on the book," Garrahy insisted. "Tony is very close to the project and I can understand his being upset at being removed from it, but Dave deVries is a different writer and will attach a different perspective to the character."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

"YAAAAHHHH!!! Somebody turn off the juice—!" Oh, it's just Black Lightning.

COMPANY UPDATES

ARCHIE COMICS
By popular demand, the Superteens return in *Archie's Superteens* #2, shipping in March. Artwork will be tag-teamed between Fred Hembeck, Bret Blevins, and Terry Austin.

ARTERY ENTERTAINMENT
Blank, the Encephalon Void #1, shipping in February, will come polybagged with a compact disc from the band, Null. Look for it at $5.95.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Comics' Greatest World is being renamed Dark Horse Heroes for its April releases...*John Byrne's Next Men* is expected to return, perhaps under a new title, in May...Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's *Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* has been delayed for a tentative late summer release.

DC COMICS
All 1995 DC Universe annuals will have a "Year One" theme to them, chronicling early stories in the title heroes' careers...In March is *Lobo's Big Babe Spring Break Special*, where the Main Man is hired to protect contestants in the Miss Voluptua Contest. By Alan Grant and Jim Balent...*Animaniacs*, the ongoing series, begins in March.

FLASHBACK COMICS
Comic legend Dick Ayers will be doing a takeoff on an old Marvel cover in which he had a hand, with *Bizarre Fantasy* #2, shipping in the spring.

HARRIS COMICS
Joe Jusko's sexy Vampirella cover from the *Dracula War* paperback will become a poster in March.

IMAGE COMICS
Extreme Studios's upcoming *Mark 5*, shipping in February, has been retitled *The Power of the Mark*. All else will remain the same.

LIGHTNING COMICS
In April, Lightning is releasing a "nude variant cover" with *Hellina: Taking Back the Night* #1. The $9.95 variant will be polybagged, and when the comic is removed from the

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Artist Dies in AUTO ACCIDENT

Peter Ledger, a color artist in comics probably best known for his work on Marvel's *Weirdworld* in 1978, was killed in a car accident in California on November 18 of last year.

Born in Australia in 1945, Ledger moved to the U.S. in 1981. His painted color on projects such as *Weirdworld* arguably introduced such techniques to American comics, leading to the range of color styles available today through both painting and computer effects.

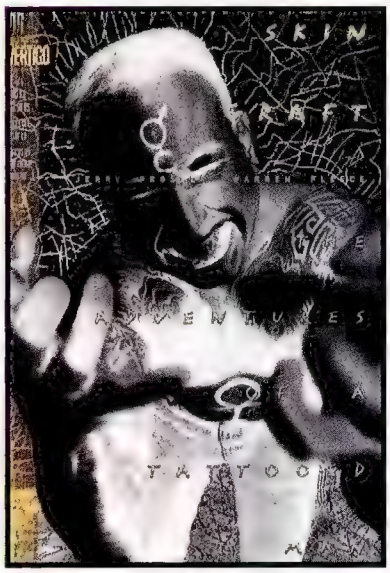
Ledger did the painting for a large project funded by George Lucas to reprint the best of Carl Barks's Uncle Scrooge stories, released as a large, limited edition hardcover by Celestial Arts in the early '80s. He did covers and stories for Eclipse and TSR in later years. He collaborated with his wife, writer Christy Marx, on Eclipse's *Carlos McLlyr* and *The Sisterhood of Steel* graphic novel in the late '80s. Most recently, he did conceptual art during the development of the *Babylon 5* TV series, as well as artwork for computer games such as *Conquests of Camelot: King Arthur and the Search for the Grail, Ringworld, Blue Force, Deep Space Nine*, and *Blood & Magic*.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

DC Garners Design Awards

Most fans are aware of the *Wizard*, Eisner, and Harvey Awards, presented to the tops in comics on a yearly basis...but **DC Comics** has recently been polishing some plaques given to the company in competition with all of publishing itself, not just the comics industry.

Print Magazine honored DC in its Regional Design Annual/1994 for a number of pieces, including the ad for ***Sandman Mystery Theatre #5***, designed by Tim Zach under the art direction of Murphy Fogelnest; the promotional poster for ***Batman/Houdini: The Devil's Workshop***, designed by Ed Bolkus; the cover to ***Skin Graft: The Adventures of a Tattooed Man #2***, with photography by Gavin Wilson, designed by Richard Bruning, and art direction by Curtis King; and a double-page spread from ***Death: The High Cost of Living***, designed by Dave McKean, with art direction by Robbin Brosterman. Each entry and its respective designers won *Print*'s Certificate for Design Excellence.



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The cover to Skin Graft: The Adventures of a Tattooed Man *#2 was one of DC's pieces honored by* Print *Magazine, a design publication.*

Out of 35,000 individual entries for the 1994 Annual, *Print* considered DC's award winners as among the best design illustration and photography produced in the United States.

In addition, DC's "KnightsEnd" counter display and the DC Depot, both designed by Ed Bolkus, received awards from the Point of Purchase Advertising Industry (POPAI). The POPAI is considered the Academy Award of three-dimensional commercial design. DC's winners were among 376 prizes awarded out of 1,100 finalists.

DC design director Ren-Julien Aussoleil commented that the awards prove "once again that DC is not only tops in publishing, but in all facets of comics promotion."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

bag, only then will Hellina be seen nude...Insomnia will be a new horror imprint from Lightning in March, the first offering of which is *Catfight* #1.

MALIBU COMICS

In March, "The Rafferty Saga" running throughout the Ultraverse titles concludes with *Firearm* #18...Creator Norm Breyfogle has officially signed on with Malibu to produce his creator-owned *Metaphysique* book for its Bravura imprint in April.

MARVEL COMICS

May's *Ren & Stimpy* #31 features a special cover of embossed sausages. (Embossed sausages? Trust us, this is something you really have to see to believe!)

MILESTONE MEDIA

***My Name is Holocaust*, a five-issue mini-series starring the rogue member of the Blood Syndicate, begins in March and is written by Ivan Velez Jr., with art by Tommy Lee Edwards and Steve Mitchell.**

MIRAGE STUDIOS

***Construct* #1 (of 6) brings alive a world inhabited exclusively by machines. Written by Paul Jenkins with art by Leo Duranona.**

TOPPS COMICS

***The Barbi Twins Adventures* #1, starring the popular twin models, ships in March with pencils by *Ghost's* Matt Haley...The trade paperback compiling *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* #1-#4 also ships in March.**

VEROTIK

Boneyard Press publisher Hart D. Fisher has been named Verotik's managing editor. Fisher will maintain his Boneyard capacity.

VERTIGO

***The Endless Gallery*, featuring pin-ups by Greg Capullo, Howard Chaykin, Jill Thompson, and many others, will ship in late March.**

VERTIGO

New Senior Editor

Vertigo editor **Stuart Moore** is now senior editor Stuart Moore. In four years at DC Comics, Moore edited *Swamp Thing, Hellblazer, The Books of Magic, The Invisibles*, and the upcoming *Preacher*, as well as limited series including *Witchcraft, Vamps*, and the two *Jonah Hex* mini-series. He is currently conceiving and developing new titles for DC and Vertigo.

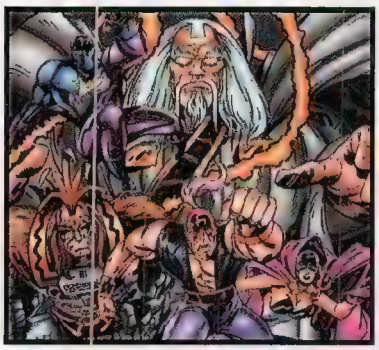
"This is an exciting place to be right now," Moore said. "My plate is definitely full, and I couldn't be happier about that."

Vertigo executive editor **Karen Berger** noted, "We expect Stuart will continue to outdo himself and help DC bring comics publishing into the future."

Medical & Legal Woes Delay PHANTOM FORCE

Genesis West's ***Phantom Force*** is going on hiatus due to both medical and legal difficulties. Artist **Mike Thibodeaux's** house was located near the epicenter of last January's earthquake in Northridge, Calif., and he was forced to evacuate his home in an extremely short time. Thibodeaux also helped a number of neighbors move, and soon found his drawing arm extremely sore. With rapidly approaching deadlines, Thibodeaux worked extra hours at the drawing board, which only succeeded in further aggravating his arm.

Thibodeaux was soon diagnosed with radial tunnel syndrome, a painful condition of the hand caused by repetitive motions; he has tried using an arm brace, anti-inflammatory drugs, special arm therapy, and most recently acupuncture to try and lessen the pain. The artist considers surgery a last resort. Genesis West has considered having other artists draw issues of *Phantom Force*, but will not commit to such an action at this time.



Phantom Force, *Jack Kirby's final project, is currently on hiatus.*

Genesis West is also being sued by the Hearst Corporation—the parent company of King Features Syndicate, which owns the rights to the Phantom—over the word "Phantom," and will be going to court. "This was Jack Kirby's last project that he was involved with, and I can't let it fall to the wayside," said Genesis West publisher **Richard French**. "We owe it to Jack."

In the interim, Genesis West will begin publishing *Professor Om* this spring, created and illustrated by **Paul Powers**.

—Greg McElhatton

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SHOOTER on Broadway

[illegible]

[illegible] a universe of science fiction and superheroes, and *Deathpoints*, an electronic underground established by gangs called the technomancers.

Coming Shooter at Broadway will be many familiar names from his Defiant and Valiant days, including managing editor Debbie Dix, executive editors Jim Chadwick, Regina Weiss, and Joe Rosenzweig, vice president and chief operating officer Jim Shooter [illegible].

—Gregory Dean O'Neill

GOLDEN AGE Comics DOMINATE Auction

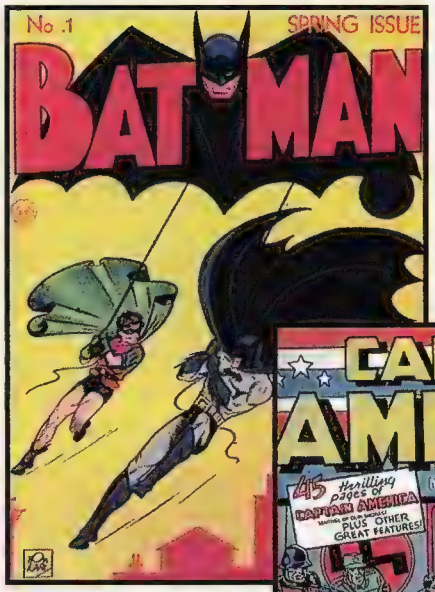
On October 29, the world-famous **Christie's Auction House** showed and sold some serious comics collectibles. But this sale was not for the faint-of-heart nor the light-of-pocketbook. The first appearance of Robin (*Detective Comics* #38, 1940) went for $7,000; *Captain America* #1 (1941), containing the first appearance of Captain America and Bucky, received a bid of $32,000; *Batman* #1 went for $29,000; and Superman proof sheets (from which Superman would run in the Sunday pages of newspapers) went for $25,000.

The auction centered around the work of **Jack Kirby**, and featured original artwork from the 1960s to the recent *Phantom Force* project. While the artwork for the entire issue of *X-Men* (vol. 1) #26 garnered a bid of $4,800, a single page of *Fantastic Four* #5 (1962) went for the same amount, *Fantastic Four* #90 (1969) went for $7,200, and *Avengers* #6 (1964) sold for $3,600.

Other artists represented in the show included: Murphy Anderson, Steve Ditko, Russ Heath, Don Heck, Carmine Infantino, Joe Kubert, Joe Maneely, Berni Wrightson, and John Severin (Silver Age); Jack Davis, Bill Elder, Bob Kane, Alex Schomburg, Joe Shuster, and Joe Simon (Golden Age); and Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Julie Bell, John Byrne, Steve Rude, and Dave Stevens (new kids).

In addition to classic comic books and scarce original artwork, the show also auctioned off TV scripts, movie memorabilia, original comic strip art, and the deal of the day—a broken "Supermen of America" badge (circa 1939) for $60.

—Ruth Morrison



These Golden Age comics fetched some serious bucks at the Christie's auction. From left: Batman #1 *and* Captain America #1.

BATMAN™ & © DC COMICS. CAPTAIN AMERICA ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

The Q on MTV

PHOTO BY J. SCHUYLER

Look out Kennedy and Puck, here comes Joe Quesada! The big Q tells MTV all about his new comic Ash *and that whole Event Comics thing.*

Anyone who knows **Joe Quesada** probably knows that the celebrated comic artist is also an experienced musician. But it may surprise fans of his rock band that Quesada's first appearance on **MTV** may have little to do with his guitar virtuosity. It'll probably be related to his new comic book company, **Event Comics**.

The 32-year-old artist was visited in November by an MTV camera crew on a fact-finding mission about the state of comic books, according to Event Comics. Both Quesada and his partner **Jimmy Palmiotti** were interviewed as promising new publishers in the comic book industry. "We were asked about creating work for the bigger companies, and what led up to Event Comics," said Quesada. "I explained that forming Event was simply the next step in the path that was started by the original Image creators."

Although material has been taped, MTV director of press relations Caroline Vincent stressed that Event's interview has not yet been edited into a segment, nor are there plans to actually air a show. "Some preliminary interviews have been done for a potential story; however, at this time, no news package on the subject has been put together and there are no immediate plans for such a package to air," said Vincent.

MTV News usually reports on events affecting the entertainment industry.

When MTV called, Quesada said he "was thrilled beyond belief. If NBC had called me up, I wouldn't have been as thrilled."

His band, Joe's Alibi (formerly Idle Chatter), played the club scene for years, yet never signed with a record company and never filmed a video. Quesada plays guitar, sings, and writes for the band. "I've been a musician longer than I've been a comic book artist," said Quesada. "Isn't it ironic that I always wanted to have my music video on MTV and instead I got my comic book company on?"

—Buddy Scalera

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UP & COMING

MIKE MAYHEW

In an odd sort of way, Mike Mayhew knew he was making progress in his attempt to break through as a comic book artist. "I was sending out these submissions and I would get these rejection letters," says the Arizona-based pencil pusher. "But, at a certain point, the rejection letters would start getting better. I started getting rejects with little notes written on the bottom of them. I knew I was starting to get somewhere."

Mayhew is currently in the loop thanks to his strong work in Topps Comics's *Zorro* and in the currently unfolding *Lady Rawhide* mini-series, also from Topps. And, claims Mayhew, it's on the shoulders of a style that borrows heavily from the silver screen.

"I tend to go with a more photo-realistic style," he reports. "It's more cinematic in terms of storytelling and illustration. I'm real big on strong facial expressions and body language, even with background characters."

Born and raised in Mesa, Arizona, Mayhew got caught up in comics; in particular, the X-titles and other major works. "I was into things like [DC's continuity-revising] *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. That was a big one. I would look at the George Pérez artwork and go, 'Wow!' That, and things like [Marvel's] *New Mutants* were my era."

Following a two-year stint in the army, Mayhew jumped on the fast track to a graphic arts career at Arizona State University. "I was really not happy with graphic design. I saw it as being a lot of work and I really wanted to do comics."

After the initial round of rejection slips, Mayhew and a good buddy took the bull by the horns and flew to a New York comic book convention to show off his bulging portfolio. "It was freezing cold and we stood outside for four hours. We finally got into the convention and there was nobody there to look at my stuff. I was real disappointed, but my friend insisted that we were not going to leave until somebody looked at my stuff."

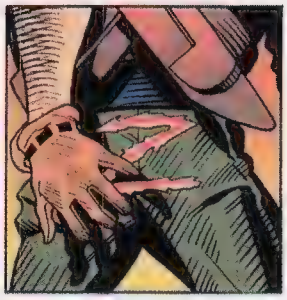
As luck would have it, veteran inker Art Nichols had not left the building. He took a look at Mayhew's efforts, liked what he saw, and set Mayhew up with the right folks at DC and Marvel. DC bit first, offering Mike an eight-page Shining Knight story, written by James Robinson, for *Showcase '93* #9.

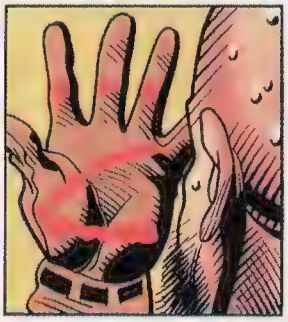
"After that, things got real slow. I figured I had broken in, but I really hadn't. I went to the San Diego Comic Con and showed my work, but I still wasn't getting any work. Finally, seven months later, DC called again and gave me the *Justice League Quarterly* books [issues #12-#15]."

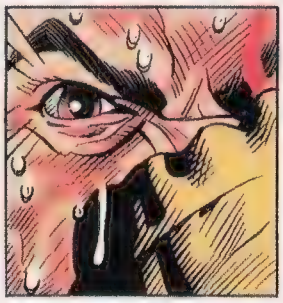
Topps followed suit with the *Zorro* assignment, issues #0-#8, and the five-issue *Lady Rawhide* mini-series. Mayhew, a bit of a nonconformist, hopes future assignments fall away from the flood of superheroes. "I'm not too stoked on superheroes. I just think they've been done to death. I feel there's a lot better stuff for people to be doing besides superheroes."

Mayhew chuckles at the notion that *Zorro* and *Lady Rawhide* have landed him on the A list. "I'm kind of out in the boonies in Arizona, so I don't really know what's going on. We'll see what happens. But do I feel like I've broken into the big time?

"Not really." —Marc Shapiro ☆







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A MORTAL KOMBAT Mini-Series from Malibu Comics

BATTLE WAVE

Begins February 1995

MORTAL KOMBAT®

BATTLEWAVE

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Robinson's newest task is to flesh out WildC.A.T.s characters such as WarBlade.

REACHING FOR THE STARS

Writer James Robinson talks about his long climb to recognition, his dream project, and his plans to radically alter the status quo of *WildC.A.T.s.*

James Robinson sounds slightly bemused. "I received some very nice letters from people who either were already familiar with Sir Richard Burton or became so after I used him as the central character in *Witchcraft* #2," he says, "but a few also pointed out that I actually made one huge historical screw-up in there. I had him being knighted by the King, when in fact Queen Victoria was still reigning in 1886. I knew that, of course. It was just a mental error I should never have made."

Who out there, among the millions who dismiss comics as "kid stuff," would believe that a writer might use a once-famous but now generally forgotten (in this country, at least) 19th century British explorer as the central figure in one of his stories? That numerous readers would scamper to the library to learn more about the man? And that some would be moved enough to note and challenge a historical inaccuracy contained in a bit of passing dialogue in a single panel?

Granted, 1994's three-part *Witchcraft* mini-series was published under DC Comics's Vertigo imprint and therefore aimed at a more mature, demanding audience than your average comics reader. On the flip side, though, Robinson's work can be geared towards a younger, more "mainstream" audience, as evidenced by his handling of the writing chores on Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s* title under Lee's WildStorm Productions banner for Image Comics. Yet, no matter what series he's working on, or what audience he's trying to reach, pushing the envelope and challenging readers is standard operating procedure for Robinson. Consider, for example, these comments about his well-received and increasingly popular *Starman*, a mainstream superhero book:

"I have always very much admired the work of Peter Ackroyd, a British writer who does both fiction and excellent biographies of literary figures. And it has always seemed to me that, whatever book he writes is not only about the characters or the person being profiled, but also part of a larger, ongoing biography of London itself. I am going to be doing the same thing with Starman's home, Opal City. I hope to turn it into a real place, with a real history, to make the city itself one of the 'characters' in the story."

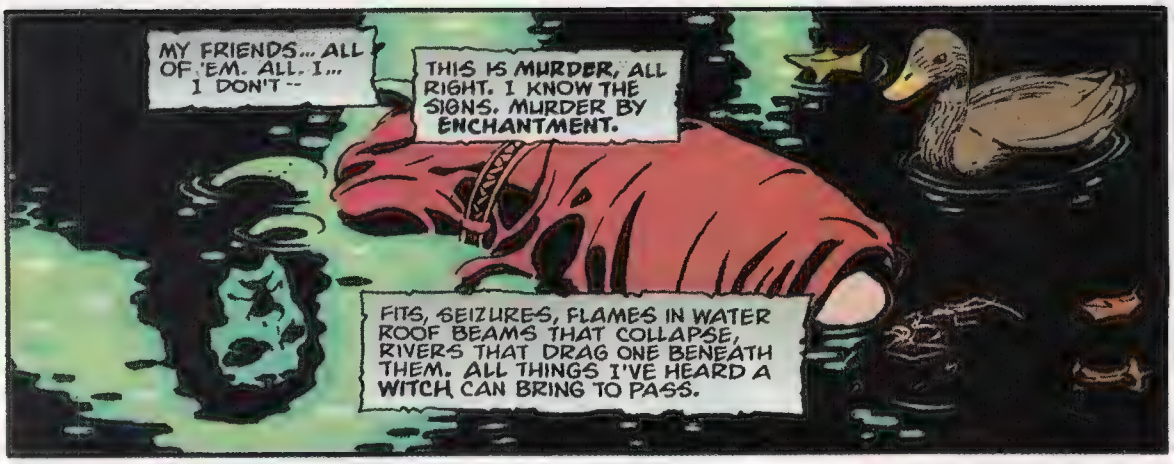
Robinson is eager to talk more about *Starman*, and will. At some length. For the sake of perspective, however, it seems we might better first turn our attention to the beginning.

by Jack Curtin

London, 1987.

Graduating with a degree in filmmaking from Polytechnic of Central London, Robinson took a temporary job at Titan Books while deciding to embark on a career. "The more I thought about it, though, the less I was sure I actually wanted to go into films. Titan had recently pub-

WarBlade and *WildC.A.T.s* ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc.



lished *Violent Cases* [by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean], and I read it and decided this might be the sort of thing I could try my hand at. So I wrote *London's Dark*."

London's Dark, with art by Paul Johnson, is a graphic novel set in London during Germany's bombing of the city in World War II, with a touch of the occult mixed in with fact and nostalgia. The book didn't appear until 1989, but that first work played a key role in launching Robinson's career well before it was ever published. For one thing, he got a pre-publication copy into the hands of Archie Goodwin—then the editor-in-chief at Marvel Comics's Epic line—seeking a publicity blurb for the rear cover, and establishing a relationship that would prove fortuitous. More importantly in the short run, Robinson met *Grendel* creator Matt Wagner at a London comics convention and slipped him a black-and-white pre-publication dummy copy and asked him to critique it. Rather than criticizing the work, Wagner telephoned Robinson with an offer to write the first story arc in the new *Grendel Tales* title that Wagner was launching with Comico, Wagner's then publisher. It was an offer too good to refuse.

Robinson moved to the United States—Los Angeles, to be exact—and began writing the Grendel story, "Four Devils, One Hell," as well as developing some other ideas. Shortly after, he married and settled in California.

Unfortunately, Comico went belly up, and Robinson was faced with a career consisting of unpublished or little-seen work. *London's Dark* had not been well-circulated in England and was virtually unknown in the U.S. His six-part *Grendel Tales* story had no place to be published. In fact, very few people in comics had ever even heard of him.

Those who had, however, proved to be crucial.

"Luckily for me, Diana Schutz had been my editor at Comico," he says, "and when she went to Dark Horse Comics, she got me a couple of *Terminator* assignments." The *Terminator: One Shot*, written by Robinson and illustrated by Wagner, was released in July 1991, followed almost immediately by a four-part mini-series, *Terminator: Secondary Objectives*, with Paul Gulacy and Karl Kesel. Robinson had also re-established communications with Goodwin, who had moved to DC and suggested Robinson work up something for *Legends of the Dark Knight*. The pair also began discussing an idea for a mini-series featuring DC's legendary Justice Society of America.

Top: Vertigo's *Witchcraft*.
Above: Robinson's *Grendel Tales* story, "Four Devils, One Hell."
Opposite: The climactic finale from *Legends of the Dark Knight: Blades*.

Robinson's "Blades," a three-part story arc that has proven to be one of the most popular in *LOTDK*'s long run, appeared in 1992. That year also saw the publication of a third *Terminator* mini-series, *Endgame* (with Jackson Guice and John Beatty), and *67 Seconds*, a graphic novel that Robinson had written early on in California. The latter appeared under the Epic imprint, with art by Steve Yeowell. Then Robinson and artist Phil Elliott began collaborating on a new project.

"I was in my [Charlie] Chaplin period at the time," he reports, "and very taken with [the Chaplin film] *Monsieur Verdoux*, an overlooked 1947 gem about a wife murderer. I decided I wanted to use the same theme and also play with the manner in which our perceptions can change as we learn new things."

This became the three-issue mini-series, *Bluebeard*, which was published by Slave Labor Graphics in 1993, the year it all began coming together for Robinson.

For one thing, he became one of the founding members of Malibu Comics's superhero imprint, Ultraverse, creating one of the line's most critically praised titles, *Firearm*.

"I was speaking regularly with Archie Goodwin about the Starman book I very much wanted to do," Robinson explains, "but it was clear that it would be some time before that could happen. I had proposed a monthly title at Vertigo, but they chose not to accept it. Since I did very much want to have a monthly going, and the people at Malibu were very, very pleasant—and an opportunity to work with [writers] like Steve Englehart and Steve Gerber and Gerry Jones was appealing—I decided to sign on. At the same time, I was committed to the *Starman* project as soon as it became available, so I agreed to try it for a while to see how things would work out."

Robinson's Alec Swan, AKA Firearm, is unique among the Ultraverse heroes in that he has no superpowers.

"On the surface, he appears to be your standard, kick-in-the-door, big gun, private eye character," says Robinson, "but there is an introspective tone running throughout the narrative that appeals to readers demanding more than just that."

Because of the character's lack of ultra-abilities, *Firearm* remained on the periphery of the Ultraverse for most of the first year, but then Robinson came up with "The Rafferty Saga," a storyline which began in issue #12 and will end his run on the title when it draws

GRENDEL AND GRENDEL TALES ™ & © MATT WAGNER. WITCHCRAFT, BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT, AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS ™ & © DC COMICS.

to a conclusion in issue #18. The story features a serial killer of superpowered people and has implications throughout the Ultraverse, crossing over into several titles along the way, so Robinson's efforts become most fully integrated into that superhero universe at the very moment of his leaving it.

Well, not necessarily leaving, as it turns out.

"It's not like I have a burning desire to end this series," he admits, "but I have desperately wanted to do *Starman* for some time, and I am very aware of the dangers of over-committing myself. Still, when the Rafferty story is finished, there are tentative plans for the title to change its name to *Codename: Firearm*. A new, deep-cover agent will be activated and the book will take on more of a James Bond feel. If that happens, it is quite likely that I'll be doing an Alec Swan mini-series each year to tie in with it. There's also a possibility that *Firearm* will become one of the [Giant-Size] books, and I've agreed to do a series of eight-page, cliffhanger backup stories under those circumstances."

Meanwhile, Robinson's *Grendel Tales* story migrated to Dark Horse after the Comico collapse and began monthly publication in August 1993, accompanied by spectacular interior art by Teddy Kristiansen and painted Matt Wagner covers. That book, together with *Firearm* and, for those who sought it out, *Bluebeard*, gave Robinson a definite presence in the market. And interest was mounting over

FIREARM ™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT INC.

Firearm, Robinson's creation for Malibu's Ultraverse.

the imminent debut of his long-awaited *The Golden Age*, the DC mini-series that starred the Justice Society of America, which Goodwin had commissioned in 1991.

Interest, and trepidation.

"A lot of people have this concept about British comics writers," says Robinson, "that what they always do is trample over the sacred ground and take these grand old characters and turn them inside out. I remember early on talking with [writer] Marv Wolfman, who didn't really twig me at that point, just knew that I was this British writer who was going to do something with the Justice Society, and he said, 'You're not going to do a Kid Eternity on them, are you?' " he says, referring to Vertigo's overhaul of the character. "And I assured him that I would not. I think you can have it both ways: you can respect the characters and their histories and tradition, and still do a story with an edge to it, with a bit of a darker twist. I wanted to write a series that would appeal to readers of the original JSA or [writer] Roy Thomas's *All-Star Squadron*, readers who truly enjoyed the characters all along, as well as to readers seeking more mature work."

The Golden Age, with superlative art by Paul Smith and textured coloring by Richard Ory, certainly achieved that goal, but shipping delays with issues #3 and #4 caused the project to be star-crossed, despite the critical raves it received.

Because every British writer working for DC Comics is just naturally assumed to be in the Vertigo fold, it comes as a surprise to some fans when they realize that last summer's three-part *Witchcraft* mini-series (with artists Teddy Kristiansen, Peter Snejbjerg, Michael Zulli, and Steve Yeowell) was Robinson's first, and so far only, work for DC's mature-oriented imprint.

"*Witchcraft* was a great deal of fun to do," he says, "and I was delighted to write something for Vertigo, as I very much enjoy many of their titles. But my central taste has always been in mainstream comics, and this is probably where I'll devote most of my energies."

Not that he's shutting the Vertigo door, by any means. He has agreed to write a second *Witchcraft* series this year, and it will be very different from the first one, he promises. The story is set in Cuba and recounts the life and death of a single witch—a lifetime, which embraces the evolution of Cuban society in the 20th Century. "I will maintain the Maiden-Mother-Crone motif from the first series, but the magic in this one will be Caribbean- and African-based," Robinson explains, "and the background and the people will be appropriately ethnic in look and attitude. An artist has not been selected as yet, and it is most likely that there will be a single artist for all three issues, since this story lends itself more to that approach."

Robinson got his first crack at the Marvel Universe last year with *Tales of Suspense*, a 64-page painted one-shot starring Iron Man and Captain America with artist Colin MacNeil, and became one of several well-known writers to sign on at Image Comics. He opened that door when he agreed to do a "Year One" mini-series starring the Jim Lee-Brandon Choi team, WildC.A.T.s.

"It's called *WildC.A.T.s: Ground Zero*," he says, "and it's more like a 'Year Minus 30' than a 'Year One' theme. The story begins

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Robinson's new version of DC's Starman.

some three decades before the present continuity." The mini-series, due to ship in mid- to late-'95, should help bring those readers who are out-of-touch with Jim Lee's famous characters up to date.

"We'll be focusing on Team One, which is really the first incarnation of the WildC.A.T.s [team], for want of a better word," says Robinson. "We'll be focusing on Zealot's son. He's somebody in the current WildStorm universe. [Also, we'll explain] Marlowe's 30 years in the wilderness, and what he did there. And the events of issues #3-#5 will focus on the modern WildC.A.T.s team. The *Ground Zero* series will end at that point at the end of *WildC.A.T.s* #1, when every member of the team comes together outside of the nightclub. [It leads up] to the very moment where they all come together to meet."

Robinson has also agreed to become the regular writer on *WildC.A.T.s* after originally committing to do a two-part story in issues #15 and #16, featuring the crack assault group, Black Razor.

"I've enjoyed working with [artist] Travis Charest, and I like putting my own spin on these characters," he admits. "I'll be doing some shorter stories at first, focusing on individual characters, leading in to the big 'WildStorm' crossover which begins in issue #20. After that, we'll shake things up with the WildC.A.T.s going off into space and a brand-new team being formed here on Earth, under the direction of Majestic [a Kherubim Lord]. I liken it to what happened in the classic *Avengers* #16, where Captain America had to put together a new team line-up. And fans should know that Ben Santini, the new Black Razor leader I've introduced, will be reappearing as well. I have some plans for him."

Robinson adds that "apart from trying to add some humanity to the Black Razors, I'll also be focusing on Voodoo and Void. I'm trying to give them a little bit more focus. Also, with Void, what her powers are and how they work have never really been clarified to any degree. So, I'll be trying to do that."

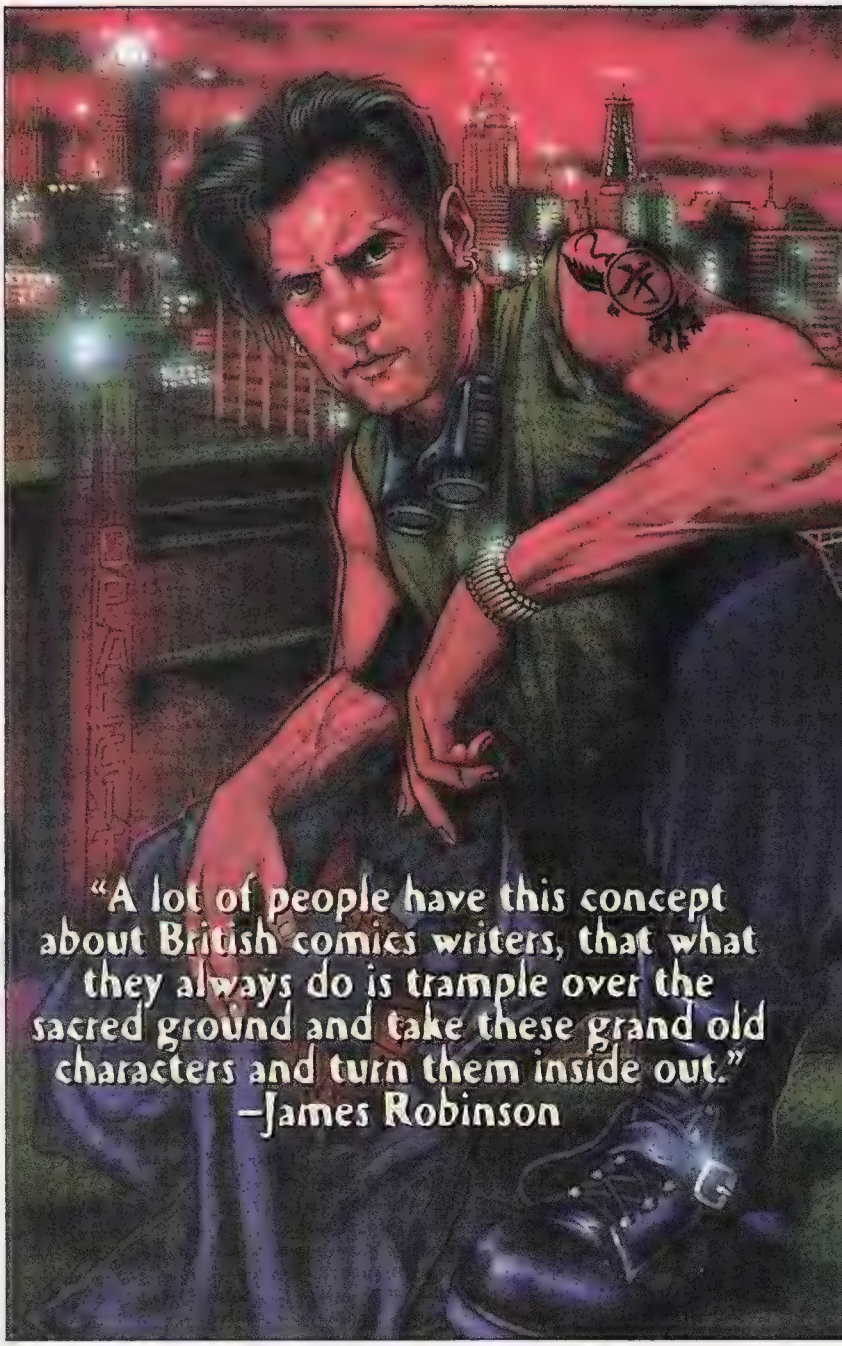
As for his favorites, well, Robinson seems to have two characters clearly in mind. "Spartan and Voodoo, really, are my favorites," he says. "If they ever sort of become the Scarlet Witch and Vision of the WildStorm Universe, I'd love to do a little mini-series on them."

Towering over all this, though, is *Starman*, Robinson's dream project. Circumspect though he might be about some of his other work, he is almost incapable of not talking about this one.

"When I first began looking at comics seriously, it was the era of Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing* and Frank Miller's work on 'Batman: Year One' [*Batman* #404-#407]—one of the great comic works of all time—and [Miller's work on] *Daredevil*," he remembers. "Those were books which had all the standard elements of a superhero title, but could at the same time appeal to a more mature level of reader. That is the sort of book I want *Starman* to be. There will be a sense of history to the book, a respect for the past, both that which we already know and things that I will be revealing. As I told you, one of the central features is that Opal City itself is one of the central characters in the book. As the story grows and unfolds, readers will find out who built the city and why it was built, as well as learn about certain dark forces within the city of which no one is aware, and how and why they took hold.

"All of the various characters in DC's long history who have borne the name 'Starman' will be accounted for at some time or another, from the Golden Age version, Ted Knight, who is a major supporting character in the book, to—as readers have already seen—Will Payton, the most recent Starman. The blue alien Starman from *First Issue Special*, the Steve Ditko Starman, they are all part of the history of the character. We'll be doing a series of special issues under the general heading 'Times Past,' and these will feature stories about these various earlier incarnations of the character or about Opal City itself.

"While Tony Harris is the absolutely per-



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fect artist for the ongoing series as I've conceived it—and it is a delight working with him—these one-shot issues will allow other artists to do their take on things. Teddy Kristiansen has done an issue focusing on the Shade back in the Victorian Era, for example, which will be the first to appear, I believe. There's also going to be a story about Ted Knight and the Golden Age Hawkman by John Watkiss, and a blue Starman story by Craig Hamilton. And Paul Grist is doing a 1940s story which tells of the adventure in which Ted Knight saved the life of Hope O'Dare's father when he was a young policeman.

"There will also be a pattern of growth and development in the relationships among the central characters. For one thing, Jack will not just go on and on as a reluctant hero—that's just too hackneyed a cliché to hold up for very long. I believe it is already evident that he is learning to accept his role. And Ted Knight realizes he was never really meant to be a great hero; his place in the great scheme of things is that he was destined to be the father of a great hero. We will build on that father-son relationship. The tensions between them, the love that they both feel for one another but are too embarrassed to express, will be a running subtext."

Robinson is also planning to turn some supporting characters in unexpected directions. The Shade, for example, is "not really a bad guy. He is immortal, and therefore, by our standards, thoroughly amoral. He has no morality except that he loves Opal City and for that reason he wants Jack Knight to succeed. He sees Jack as the hope of Opal City, its first great protector since the person who represented the law in Opal City back at the turn of the century. That first hero, by the way, was a familiar DC hero of the Old West whose identity I'm not ready to reveal as yet. I will say, though, that he has been reincarnated in the current cast of characters.

"Another thing that I think will surprise people is that, while there will be a love interest for Jack, it will not be Hope O'Dare. Hope will remain an important part of the cast but, for the moment at least, her relationship with Jack will not be romantic. And the Mist's daughter, Nash, will return, but she will be a very different personality when she does. She has been transformed by the death of her brother, for which she feels responsible because she let Jack live in issue #2."

Finally, having inspired readers to do some historical research with the introduction of Richard Burton into the *Witchcraft* story, Robinson plans to send them rattling about in the pages of yet another dusty volume a few months down the line. "It will be revealed that it was the Shade who inspired Charles Dickens to write *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 1840. He, in fact, served as the model for one of the book's characters, Dick Swiveller," Robinson says. "And another character in that novel, the hunchback Daniel Quilp, was inspired by someone else we will meet, a very evil person who has the same powers as the Shade and who will be coming to Opal City towards the end of the book's second year."

James Robinson will, of course, make every effort to insure that all references to Dickens and his work are entirely accurate.

If not, he expects his readers will let him know all about it. ☆

Jack Curtin is a freelance writer from Philadelphia, Pa., who wants to know why Elizabeth Taylor wasn't mentioned in the Richard Burton issue of Witchcraft.

WARBLADE & RIPCLAW

WildStorm Studios joins the ecology war with *WarBlade: Endangered Species*, a four-issue limited series beginning in January.

Written by Steve (*Sandman Mystery Theatre*) Seagle, penciled by Scott (*StormWatch*) Clark, and inked by Sal (*The Kindred*) Regla, *WarBlade: Endangered Species* pits WarBlade and Ripclaw against the Faction, the Daemonites, and a new villain, Pillar, the leader of the Faction. Pillar drives the creation of an indestructible power suit to enslave and conquer the planet.

"The rest of the Daemonites are against the Faction because the Faction will use the suit to conquer the rest of the Daemonites as well," says WildStorm productions marketing director Jeff Mariotte. "Pillar has the same origins as Ripclaw and WarBlade, with the same powers and abilities. But he's gone rogue from the Daemonites. The series title refers to several environmental issues that are raised in the story. We're not doing it in a preachy way, but in a way that will get people thinking about what we as a race are doing to the planet. The Daemonites are trying to damage the planet and its occupants, but at the same time, so are the humans."

Clark says the series focuses on character development and background information about WarBlade, Ripclaw, and Pillar throughout the series. The first issue sports a full-color gatefold cover.

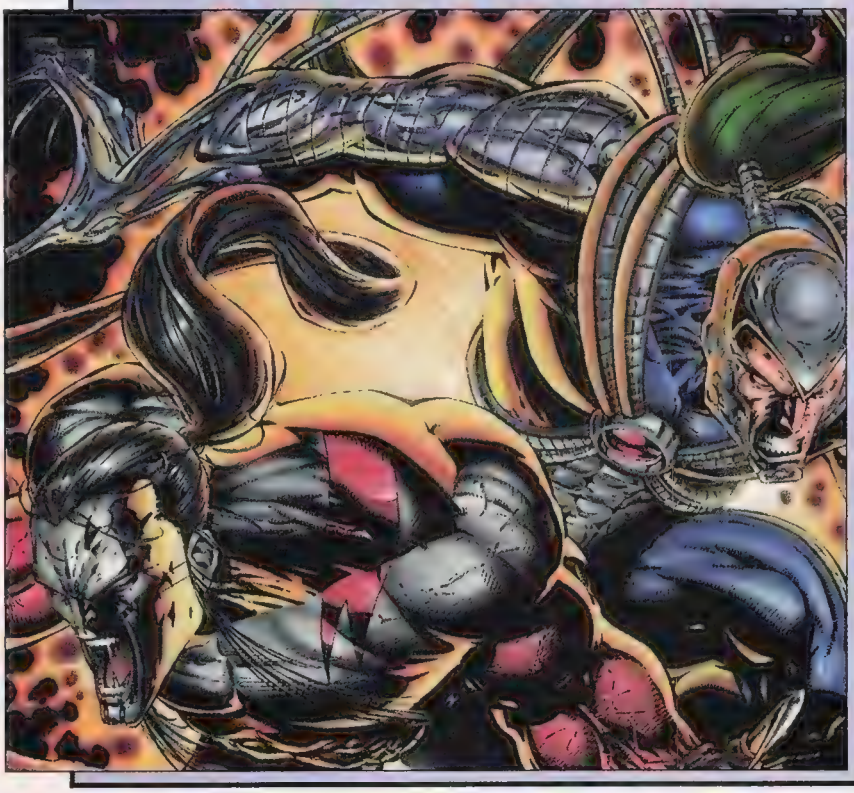
"It's not just a big four-issue fight scene," Clark says. "There are plenty of twists. We tie in a message about ecology, and the damage we're doing to the planet. We'll realize some things about ourselves from this series."

As revealed in the "Killer Instinct" crossover from *WildC.A.T.s* #6 and #7 to *Cyberforce* #2 and #3, WarBlade and Ripclaw are Native American brothers with a strong bond to the Earth. So they have to work together and do battle together for the sake of the entire Earth, protecting it from the assaults launched by the Daemonites. According to Mariotte, *Endangered Species* will answer many questions raised in "Killer Instinct."

There has been an ongoing discussion at Image, says Clark, about continuing titles for both WarBlade and Ripclaw, and the success of *Endangered Species* will have some impact on that.

"I prefer drawing WarBlade; it's why I came onto this project. I like the gritty, hard-edged characters. They're the most fun to draw."

—Cary St. Lawrence



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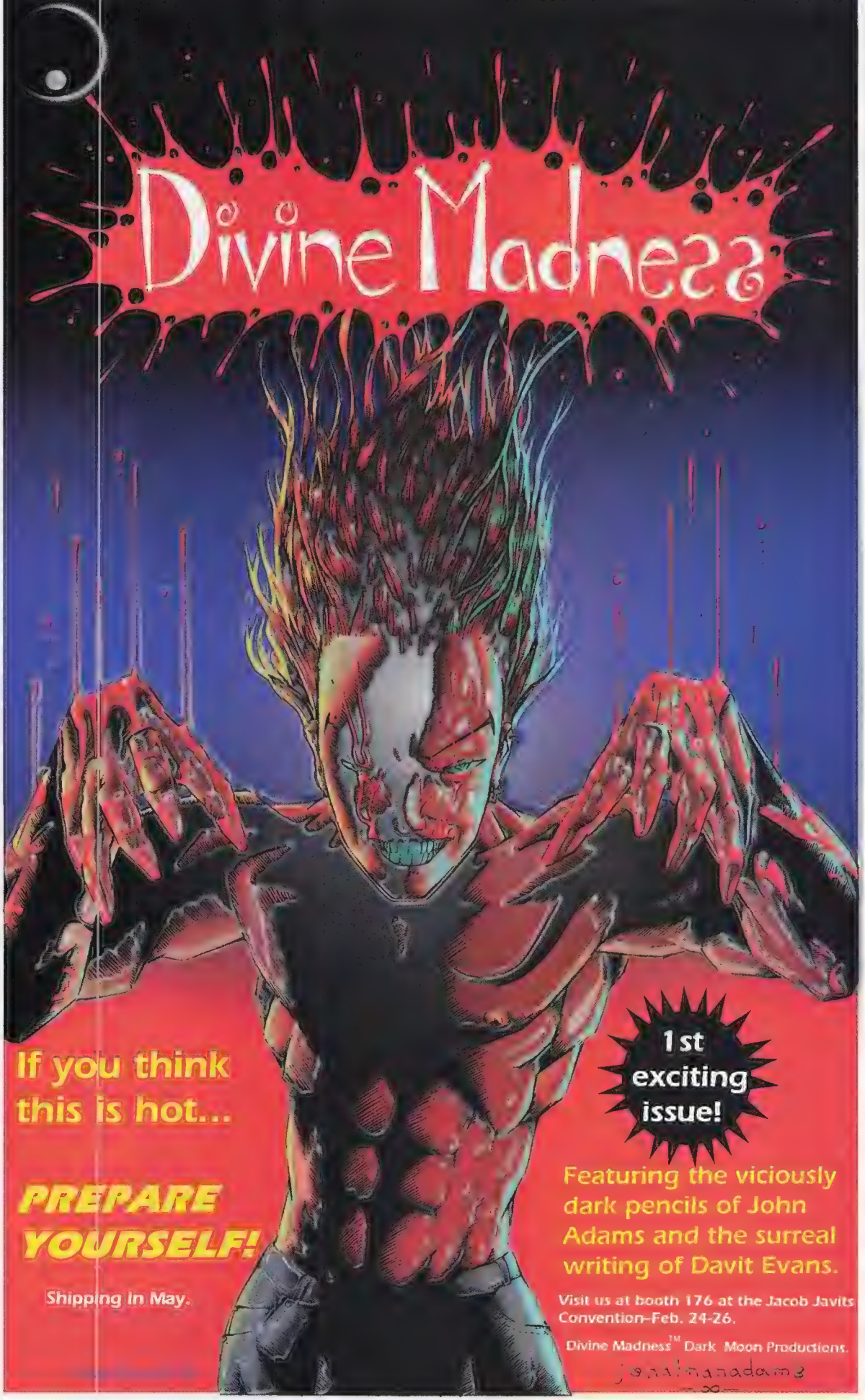
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How to go through the legal ropes of copyrighting and trademarking your own creations.

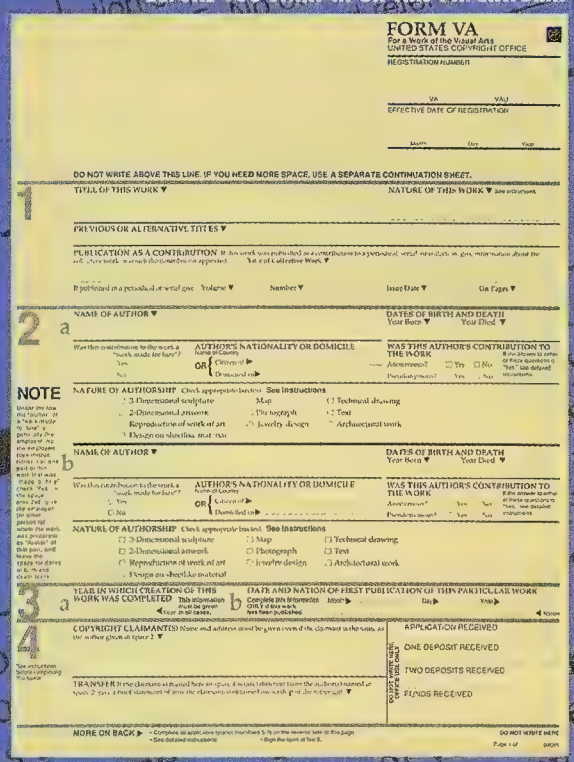
Swiftly onto the page comes the superhero: faster than light, stronger than stone, a new hero for the ages, and most importantly, your very own new creation. But, do you actually own it? And if you do, how do you protect yourself from being ripped off?

Well, the law is supposed to be there to protect you and/or allow you to go after the people that are ripping you off. The copyright and trademark laws—which are countrywide, by the way, and do not vary by state—as well as some other perplexing rules, commonly referred to by that newly chic, glamorous phrase "intellectual property law," are there to protect your very own superhero or other comic creation. Actually, any type of creation is ripe for thievery and merits protection: witness the case of Sid & Marty Krofft Television Productions Inc. vs. McDonald's Corp. in 1977. In this case, the court ruled that the characters used in a McDonald's commercial too closely resembled the characters of the *H.R. Puff 'n' Stuff* childrens' TV show, and the two parties made a deal in which McDonald's altered its characters enough to dissolve the similarity. Now, let us take a simple journey down the road to protecting your own new creation with copyrights and trademarks.

Copyrights

Under the current law, when you "fix the expression of your idea," you immediately have copyright protection. This protection starts as soon as your creation is made. In other words, as you finish your drawing or story, you have automatically obtained your copyright.

The copyright, however, only protects certain things. These copyrightable elements are limited to creative (or, in some cases, not so creative) expression. The ideas underlying the expression are not covered or protected by copyright. This means that many people can have the same idea or concept, like, for example, a hero with the power to see through things. The copyright cannot protect the *idea* of X-ray vision. It does, however, protect the manner in which you *express* and *illustrate* the idea of this power. Thus, the storyline where our



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By Jeffrey E. Jacobson

hero gained his X-ray power by ingesting large amounts of radioactive swamp water, while being raised in the Bayou, might very well qualify as protectable expression. The copyright protects the expression that you create and gives you the exclusive right to own and use that expression. This will protect both you and your expression from literary thieves.

Copyright notices are very important. Although American law no longer requires them, using them is the right thing to do. The notice is made up of the letter "c" in a circle (©), year of publication (i.e. printing) or creation, and the name of the copyright owner. The precise order is not exactly prescribed by the law, but the most common form of notice used is the symbol followed by the year and name of the owner. You can spell out the entire word "copyright," write the abbreviation "copr.," or use the universal copyright symbol (©). Because of our nation's observance of some international treaties, which mandate reciprocal treatment, the best practice is to use the universal copyright symbol. In other words, you can get automatic copyright protection in a lot of other countries by using this symbol.

Registration of your copyright with the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. is also no longer required. Yet, like the copyright notice, it is a good practice. Registration is simple and inexpensive. For a mere $20, you can register your rights for your unpublished or locally published work.

The various forms you will need are easily obtainable from those nice folks at the Copyright Office in Washington through a phone call, postcard, or just a little note. The mailing address is: Register of Copyrights, Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559. The office has a 24-hour hotline at 202-707-9100. Call and ask for a set of forms and some general information. You should be sent a free package, including your very own copy of the copyright law.

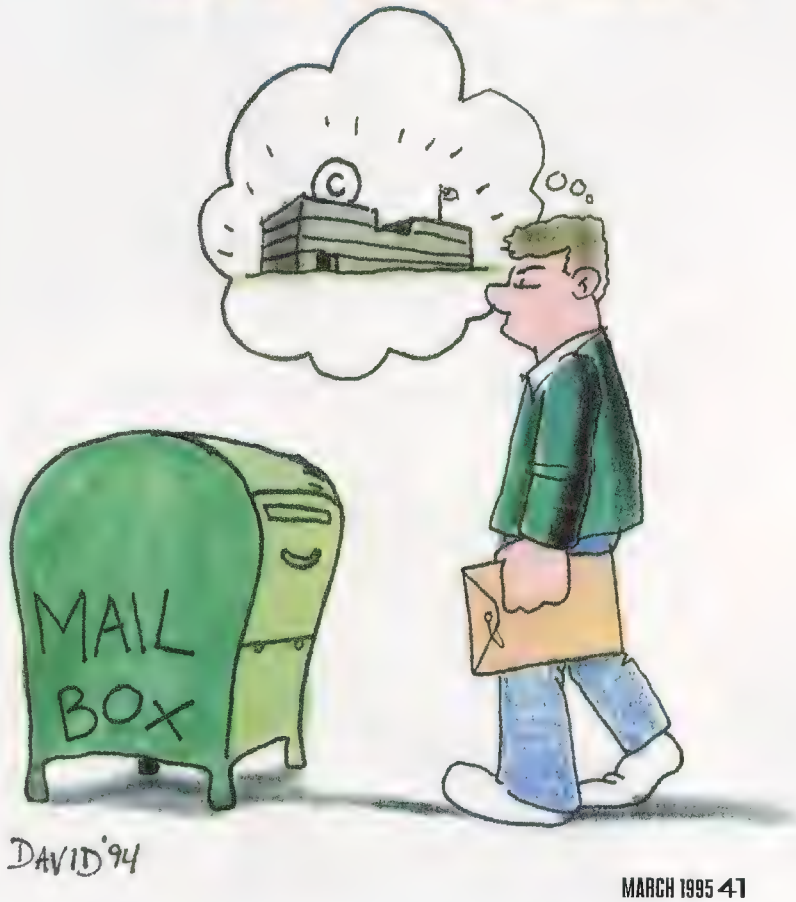
The applications you might need include the Form TX (for written non-dramatic text, which means no plays or musicals) and Form VA (for the visual arts). If you have an entire finished comic book, you should use the "TX" form, specifying that you have created the words, as well as the pictures. If your comic book story has no illustrations, you should also use the "TX" copyright form. If the pictures have no words, then you should use the "VA" form.

If you are publishing your books on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, etc.), you can register several issues on the "SE" form (serials). The "SE" copyright form is for registrations of serials or periodical publications. This form is for works issued or intended to be issued in successive numbered or dated parts, and intended to continue indefinitely.

If you contribute stories to a periodical, you can keep your copyright by having the company publish your own copyright notice on or near your contribution in the publication. These articles (or stories or cartoons) can then be registered on the "VA" form (if only pictorial images), the "TX" form (if only words or words together with illustrations), or on the "GR/CP" form (groups). The "GR/CP" form permits a group of several contributions within the same year to a periodical, to be registered in one set, on one registration. For example, if you're a cartoonist who submits one cartoon each week to a newspaper, rather than sending in a whole slew of forms, you can group a number of your cartoons together—up to one year's worth—on one form. For a year's worth of cartoons, however, you must send each and every cartoon—you cannot preregister without the actual materials—so if you only have a month's worth ready, you can only register that amount of cartoons. The "GR/CP" form goes along with the "TX" or "VA."

For copyright registrations, you need to send the copyright office a completed form with your 20 bucks (which is a lump sum that pays for any number of submitted registration forms), and one copy of your work (if unpublished) or two copies (if it's been published, printed, or distributed). You should also put a self-addressed, pre-stamped postcard into your copyright application package, detailing and listing the items submitted. List the title, number of copies, type of application (i.e. "TX" or "VA"), and the dollar amount of the check submitted, on the card. The Copyright Office mail room will stamp the card acknowledging receipt of the material, which is very important, because it proves that your application was received. After all, we are dealing with the federal government here, and since there are thousands of these applications arriving in Washington, D.C. every day, some have occasionally been lost. You don't want your copyright registration application to be included among those missing in action, so sending it by certified mail with a return receipt requested, along with proper postage, or the less expensive, prepaid postcard—which the Copyright Office will return to you—provides an easy way to make sure

To be sure your registration forms are received, send 'em by certified mail!



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the application gets there. In the event of a loss after the material is received, at least you can contact the people at the Copyright Office with their acknowledgment. It gives them an incentive to help you, since this proves that losing the package was their fault. Put the postcard on top of the check and registration form; this will usually catch their attention.

Approximately four months after the bureaucrats get your materials, you will receive your copyright certificate with an effective date, which is retroactive to the date the office received your materials (the same as the date stamped on the self-addressed postcard they returned to you).

Although you no longer need a copyright notice, nor a copyright registration, to obtain copyright protection, you should still follow these formalities. The full benefits of the copyright are only available to you where there is a notice and registration. These benefits include better rules for damages, as well as recovery of attorney's fees and court costs, should you actually get ripped off.

A newly created character is much harder to protect. One good way of obtaining copyright protection for your character is through registration of a style sheet. These are drawings depicting your new guy (girl, mutant, robot, being, etc.) in many poses, which will help you protect this new creation. But it's not so easy. Remember, the copyright only protects the expression, not the idea. That means that a drawing of a man is just an expression of the idea of a man. The copyright protects the "special" nature of your expressed creation. The elements of your character which are the same for every man, woman, hero, or mutant will not be protected by the copyright. This, by the way, is why creators publish ashcan comics. That way, even though a certain comic book isn't finished yet, a company can protect its characters sooner.

Now let's explore the character's name. You cannot copyright a name. You may, however, be able to get a trademark in the name, image, and/or appearance of the character through use in commerce. If you thought copyrights were a little complicated, brace yourself: here comes...

Trademarks

A trademark is generally a symbol, word, or logo used in business to sell things. It is a mark that, to the public, represents where the goods came from (or services, for a servicemark). Once you use the mark in commerce, you acquire common law rights to that word, symbol, or logo, unless someone can prove he or she used it first. These common law rights may be eligible for registration. There are federal and state registrations of trademarks.

Let's explore this business of someone using the trademark first. If someone lived in a really remote area, we could imagine they never heard of "Superman." If that someone created a character and called it Superman, they would not get any rights to the name because someone else got the rights first. How do you know? Well, you do something that's called a trademark search.

A trademark search can presently be done "on-line" through various computer services, ordered from one of several companies that specialize in conducting searches, or obtained through a law firm. At the very least, the search will establish whether anyone has registered this mark (name, symbol, logo, etc.) with the Patent and Trademark Office in Washington, D.C. You will also find out if anyone has an application for registration that is pending, or if there is an "intent to use" notice in process. "Intent to use" simply means that the name or logo is not actually being currently used, but that someone is planning on using it in the future. Using this notice, some-

A "trademark search" will tell you if someone has beaten you to the punch.

TM & ©

one has approximately six months to a year to actually use the name or logo (or they'll lose the rights to it), and can usually apply for extensions. Additionally, the people who do this search for you can investigate all the state registrations, as well as various directories and data bases, to see if there are any other common law users. At the most, this can be done on a worldwide basis, but that is probably too much under the circumstances.

Once your search is complete, you can either register your mark with the federal government based on your desire to reserve it subject to printing your first books (using the "intent to use" application), or you can start your work. You cannot register the trademark, however, until you are using it. Each state registers these marks, and state registrations are quick and cheap—they cost around 50 bucks and take around four to six weeks. You can get the application from the Secretary of State in your state's capital, whose address can usually be found somewhere in your phone book.

Once your use crosses state lines, you are using your mark in interstate commerce. This means you can apply for federal registration, a process which may take as long as a year from application to registration. The current filing fee is $245, and it goes to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Patent & Trademark Office, Washington, D.C. 20231. Write the department a note, and it will send you some good stuff on trademarks.

You also have to pay a separate fee for each class of merchandise that you want to register your mark for. The trademark is registered based on the kinds of things you are selling, and it basically tells the public where the goods came from. The purpose of these laws is to protect the public so it knows the source of goods and products. The source of these products is important to the consumer because he or she will associate a certain degree of quality with the originator (or source) of the product. You associate the name Hostess™ (for good or bad) with those gooey snack foods, but if some other company named Hostess were to put out something like basketballs, you would wonder if it's the same company that makes Twinkies™, and whether that company was as good as the Hostess name seems to be. So, you register for a specific category, such as publications, or other products, including T-shirts, keychains, backpacks, toys, etc.

And, as shown above, two different people or companies can own the same trademark for different things. That's how you end up with Cadillac cars and Cadillac dog food. The government is concerned with whether two producers of different non-competing goods with the identical (or very similar) name will confuse the buying public. Minor variations in spelling may or may not help you in obtaining a registration. Recently, New York federal courts held that the comic-buying public was sophisticated enough not to be confused between one book called *Plasmer* (put out by Marvel Comics) and what became Defiant's *Warriors of Plasm*.

Well, we have just completed our first journey down those murky copyright waters, yet there are many more issues and variations to the copyright and trademark topics. Like many things in life, copyrights and trademarks are not simple. There are more gray subjects in this area than there are black-and-white rules. So, if you have any problems or questions about the whole copyright mess, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with questions to the address below, and we'll try to help.

Also, you should be aware of the rumors circulating that the copyright filing fees are going to be increasing soon—they may or may not be true. Trademark registration fees, however, are always being raised.

Above all, the speed with which you secure registration of your rights, and make your applications, can be crucial in the protection of your creation. So, get your forms in as soon as you can, and remember: "know your copyRIGHTS." ☆

Jeffrey E. Jacobson is an avid comic book reader. To pay for this important activity, he practices law in New York City with Jacobson & Colfin, P.C., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010. This office specializes in copyrights, trademarks, and entertainment law, and does a great deal of work in music, video, the arts, and most importantly, comics.

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Now how do you win that high-performance bad boy? Well, you gotta use your noggin and come up with some sort of cool contest we can run here in *Wizard*. We're kinda known for runnin' some of the cooler contests around, but we can't come up with 'em all the time. So what we want you to do is come up with an idea for a really cool contest, something that makes comic fans drool with anticipation, and is also fun as hell to enter. Like what? Well, we're looking for fresh ideas, but here's a quick rundown on some of the more popular contests we've run:

SCAVENGER HUNT

In this annual contest, fans have to track down over 100 weird items (like McDonalds coffee stirrers and pictures of Suzanne Somers using a Thigh Master™) in hopes of hitting one of several point-total categories and winning one of over 1,000 prizes.

1,001 COMIC BOOK CHALLENGE

In the hopes of winning 1,001 of the coolest comics of all time, *Wizard* fans had to come up with innovative ways to promote the name of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* inside and outside the comic book industry.

MADMAN COSTUME CONTEST

Fans competed against one another to design a funky new costume for Mike Allred's Madman character, with the winning entry appearing in an issue of *Madman Comics* (the winner also got a piece of original Mike Allred art depicting Madman wearing the winning costume).

SCULPT A PITT

After slapping on a pair of rubber gloves, fans had to sculpt Dale Keown's Pitt character using nothing but various luncheon meats (you know, like Spam™ and liverwurst and stuff), with the creator of the coolest sculpture winning a limited-edition bronze Pitt statue from Image, sculpted by Clayburn Moore.

Pretty neat stuff, eh? Well, now that you've got an idea of what we're looking for, here's what we want from you: A 100-200 word description of your contest idea, including what fans have to do to enter, and possible prizes that they can win.

Then slap your idea—typed or neatly handwritten—into an envelope, moisten and attach a stamp, throw the official entry form below into it, and mail the whole thing off to:

3DO Interactive Multiplayer and the 3DO Compatability Symbol are trademarks of the 3DO Company. All Rights Reserved.

Contest Contest

c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Hey, we actually plan to use the winning idea in a future issue! That means we're looking for an idea that can actually "fly"—the entrants should be able to handle the task! Also, get creative fast—this contest expires April 28, 1995!

Legal Lingo

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and their immediate families, and anybody, and I mean anybody, who liked the friggin' *Street Fighter* movie. What were they thinking? Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card. Enclose your contest idea on a separate sheet of paper. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Contest Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. What the hell does 3DO stand for? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by April 28, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected by the *Wizard* staffers, who will look for the most original and creative idea, and will also look for feasibility. The judging will be conducted on May 1, 1995 by Wizard Press.

For the winner's name, available after May 19, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Contest Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

Contest Contest Entry Form

I am:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) DATE OF BIRTH

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

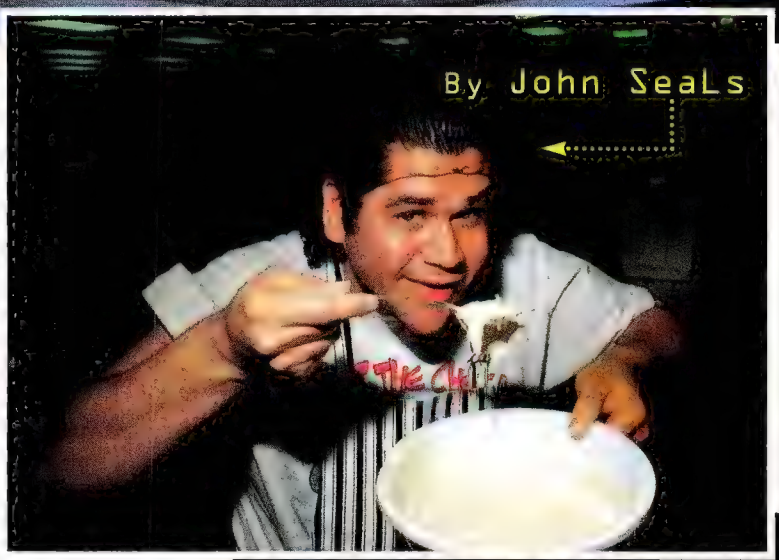
PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE)

(Enclose your contest description on a separate sheet of paper.)

Hot off the Griddle

Do comics really sell like hotcakes?

By John SeaLs



Great philosophers have been pondering questions about the human condition since the advent of consciousness. Is there a God? Does that little light stay on after you close the refrigerator door? Who created Marvel's Cable? If a comic is hot, and I mean *really* hot, does it actually hold to that old cliché and sell like hotcakes?

The wacky *Wizard* staff has long debated that last little enigma during many a late-night discussion. OK, it probably came up over beer and pizza one night. In any case, I'll confess that I was proud to be chosen for this undertaking. However, to be frank, I just might possibly be the only person in America so in dire need of a buck that I'd do darn near anything the *Wizard* staff dreams up.

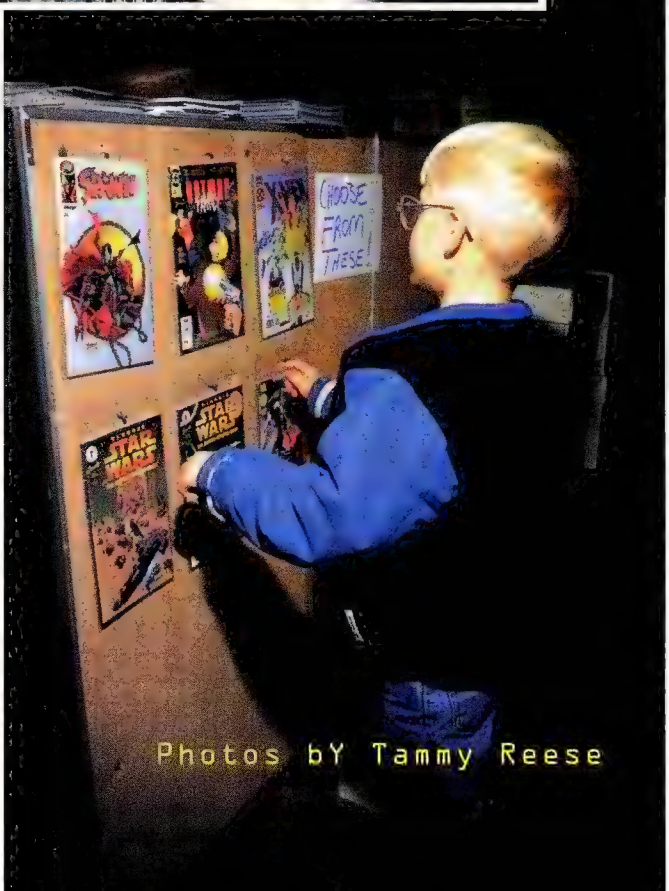
The idea is this: we set up a griddle, cook up some hotcakes, and offer every fanboy or fangirl who can waddle in to a comic shop a choice between a free comic or all the pancakes he or she can eat—pancakes, I might add, that'd be cooked up by none other than yours truly. Now we'd finally be able to determine whether or not comics truly sell like hotcakes.

First on my list was to choose a location. To me, the site was obvious: Twin Cities, Minn.-based Shinders, the area's largest comics retailer and my former employer. A quick perusal of the store's 13 locations revealed suburban Crystal, Minn., to be the biggest comic site in the chain. Arrangements were made with Ron Lasner at Shinders's Minneapolis HQ, and we were on our way...almost.

It seems the city of Crystal has some pretty strict rules about when and where a guy can park a griddle and begin dispensing comics and flapjacks. Mr. Lasner informed me that the city would not approve our "variance" for in-store frying until November 17th's council meeting. This put a definite fly in our ointment (or batter, if you will), as we had originally planned the shindig for November 5. I hastily put in a call to City Hall to plead my case.

"The City of Crystal requires that food being served to the public meet certain health department guidelines," a helpful clerk told me, "and this has to go before the City Council on the 17th, not before."

"I promise to wash my hands and shower the night before the event," I offered magnanimously.



Photos bY Tammy Reese

"Sorry, sir," the bureaucrat replied, "my hands are tied."

"I can even trim my nails first," I said, playing my trump card.

"Sorry, you'll just have to wait."

Well, we rescheduled and moved on, learning that even a guy with decent hygiene can't fight City Hall.

The 17th came and we got our variance. So, the following Saturday I showed up at the store promptly at 9:13 a.m. with my spatula in hand.

"You'd better hurry, Seals; the whole thing starts at 9:30," issued Drew, the store's 6-foot-9-inch manager. "And wasn't your nickname Spunky, when you used to work down at [Shinders's] Nicollet store?"

It might be a long morning, I thought.

Unfazed, I quickly surveyed all the gear I needed for the upcoming extravaganza:

- **One box of Dark Horse Comics's *Classic Star Wars: A New Hope* #1.**
- **One box of Dark Horse Comics's *Classic Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* #2.**
- **One box of Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* #24.**
- **One box of Marvel Comics's *Uncanny X-Men* #318 and #319.**
- **One box of DC Comics's *Batman Adventures* #26.**
- **One box of DC Comics's *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #0.**
- **One spatula.**
- **Five boxes of Krusteaz™ (pronounced "Crusteez") pancake mix. "Just add water."**
- **Four containers of generic pancake syrup.**
- **One photographer: St. Paul's Tammy Reese.**
- **Two gallons of genuine spring water for mixing batter.**
- **11-inch West Bend™ fully submersible electric skillet with DuPont Teflon™ coating.**
- **200 paper plates.**
- **200 plastic forks.**
- **Apron.**
- **Hairnet.**
- **White T-shirt with Marlboro™ cigarette pack rolled up in sleeve.**
- **Tattoo.**

After donning my cooking gear and setting up, I became aware of two undeniable facts. First, I'm the only person in history who has ever done this. And second, I knew just as much about pancake preparation as I could discern from the side of the first box of Krusteaz I opened.

"Just add water," I said to no one in particular.

With everything ready, we threw open the doors in anticipation of the milling throng sure to be waiting outside. Instead, there was just some guy named Craig.

"Is this all you can eat?" he asked, licking his chops.

"Yes, it is," I replied, still searching for the milling throng. "Are you sure we've got the right date here?" I asked Drew.

The only answer I got was Craig's hungry stare.

"Serve 'em up," he said, picking up a fork.

So, for the next 15 minutes or so, I flipped Krusteaz™ flapjacks off the grill as Craig chowed down, all the while chasing the syrup-covered delights with a can of ice-cold Mountain Dew™. (What a combo. Yecch!)

Craig's culinary criticism was limited to a passing "not bad" as he tossed away his plate and fork, wiped off his chin, put on his coat, and went to wherever it is the Craigs of the world go to after eating free pancakes.

Some people like anything free, I guess.

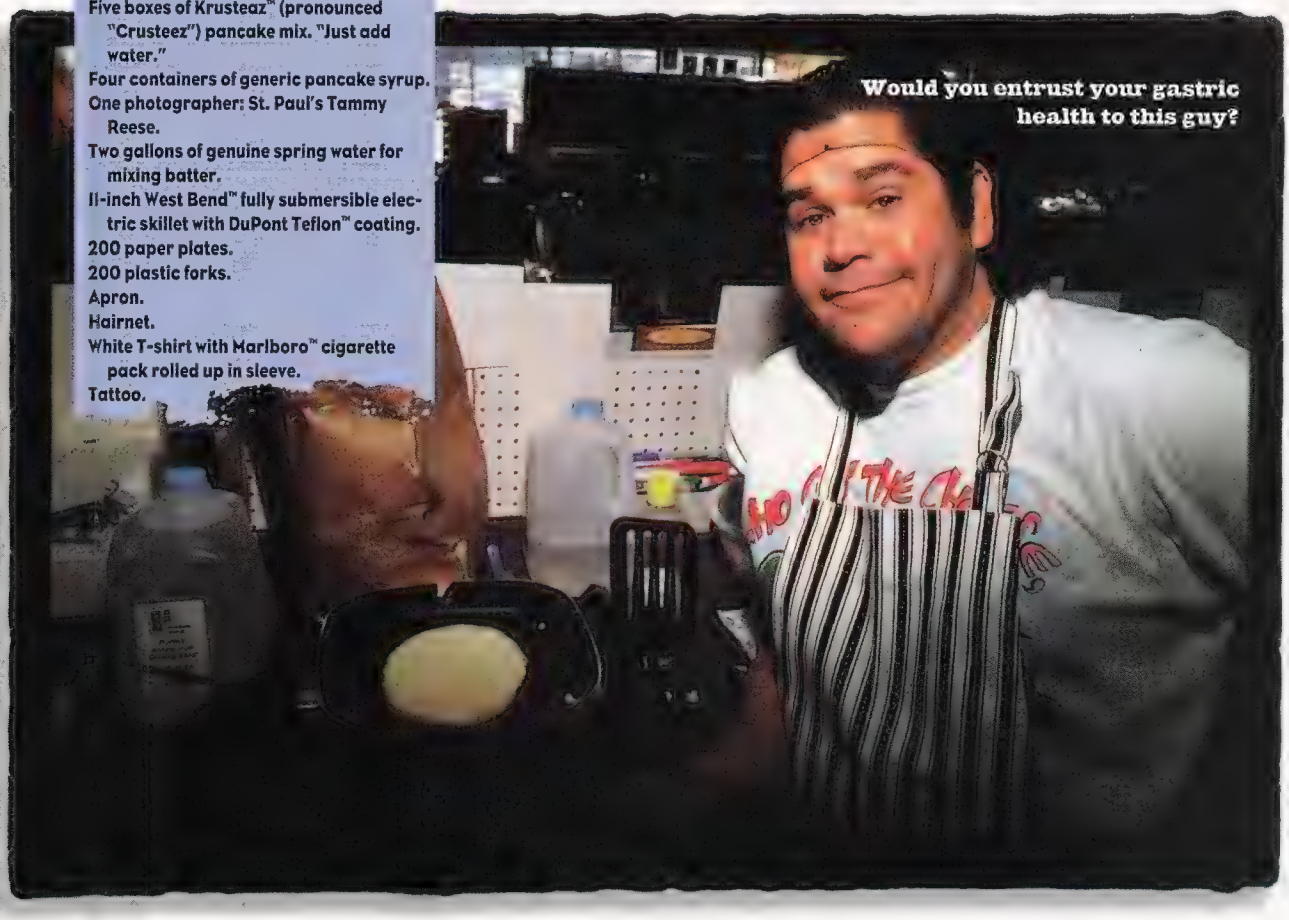
The next few visitors each snatched up a copy of *Uncanny X-Men*, which I hoped would be the trend for the day. Not necessarily the *Uncanny X-Men* books, you understand, but the comics in general. The truth was, I had spent the better part of the night before at St. Paul's Half-Time Rec lounge with my lip hung over a glass of Guinness™, and the cooking fumes were giving me some nasty flashbacks.

As we experienced a momentary lull around 10:00 a.m., I hollered, "Free comics or free pancakes, courtesy of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*." This resulted in a momentary surge of interest and would serve me throughout the day.

Whenever you spend some time with an assorted collection of comic humanity, you're bound to run into some strange people and strange things, and today was no exception. For instance, at around 10:00, the first of what was to be *three* different guys named Bob Parker arrived, this one with his wife in tow.

This particular Mr. Parker was an older, distinguished gentleman who bought at least one copy of nearly every comic that came out each week. As you can imagine, he was more interested in my pancakes than free comics.

"These don't look like pancakes at all," Bob replied to my offer. "In fact, they look



Would you entrust your gastric health to this guy?

more like biscuits."

I guess they were kind of thick, but I was sure I was following the directions to the letter, so I went ahead and proudly served up Mrs. Parker a steaming golden brown pancake of her own.

Nearby, I could see another older man was having second thoughts about the whole operation and was preparing to leave.

"Hold it, sir—here," I said, "have an *X-Men* comic. I'm sure it's done in the middle," unlike some of the pancakes I've been serving. He took the comic.

I soon got into a routine of passing out cakes and comics, which was quickly interrupted by a second strange occurrence, when three pancakes in a row came out looking exactly like a road atlas of Spain.

"Is this brown spot supposed to be Madrid?" asked a high school kid with an Excalibur T-shirt on.

"Is it too late to bring back corporal punishment in schools?" I retorted, holding my spatula menacingly.

At this point, I checked my official *Wizard* scorecard to discover that, up until this time, comics were outpacing pancakes at a rapid clip of more than two to one. *Uncanny X-Men* was the most popular comic chosen so far, but *Spawn* held a close second.

The next cultural oddity I encountered was that peculiar subset of humanity that absolutely will not accept anything that's free. Throughout the morning I encountered no less than six of these malcontents whom I couldn't force a free flapjack or comic upon, even if I'd held a gun to their heads.

Near the counter, a young girl perused a poster display that was chock full of pictures of the cast of *Baywatch*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

"Would you like a free comic, miss?" I asked politely.

"I don't read comics," she replied shyly.

"How about some free pancakes, then?"

"Not hungry."

"But these comics, they're free. No charge. Complimentary. Gratis. No strings attached," I implored.

"No thanks," she said, staring at a picture of Luke Perry's sideburns.

"But they're free," I whined.

Mmmmm...comics!

She just shook her head and moved over to a magazine section. As she walked away, I wondered if they still sold *Tiger Beat* magazine and shook my head. Turn down free comics? I shuddered. In my Marvel-Zombied youth, I would have walked clear across the state of Nebraska for a free copy of *Strange Tales* featuring Brother Voodoo. In a snowstorm. Barefoot, even.

For the next half-hour we mostly gave out comics and answered dozens of inane questions from dozens of inane fanboys.

"Are these comics free?"

"That's what the sign says, son. Or you can have some free pancakes."

"You mean to eat?"

I was waiting for someone to ask if the free comics were to *read*.

They say that comics get little kids interested in reading and can help them learn about the world and build a better vocabulary. Well, you certainly couldn't prove it by me. Maybe this was true in the old days, but most modern comics consist only of phrases like "LET'S GET 'EM!" or "YOU KILLED MY BROTHER!" (insert big gun and accompanying gunfire here). Think about it. When was the last time you saw the phrase "Sanctum Sanctorum" in a modern comic? Of course, when was the last time somebody offered you a free pancake or a copy of *X-Men*?

By this point in the day, it was clear that comics were going like...well, comics, and hotcakes were going more like back issues of *Millie the Model*.

At just past 11, the second of the day's three Bob Parkers showed up (this Bob was a Shinders employee), two kids in tow, and chose a short stack of flapjacks. Meanwhile, his two cute little urchins snapped up a free comic apiece.

"Do you get paid for this?" Bob asked as he ate.

"I sure hope so," I said, as I tried to flip a pancake high in the air, professional frycook style. Unfortunately, the unruly hotcake landed half-in/half-out of the skillet and hung there on the edge like some dead guy from a Schwarzenegger flick.

"Are you sure you don't want a comic?" I asked a hungry kid who was waiting with his paper plate in hand.

By 11:15, the breakfast crowd was beginning to file out and most people were opting for a morning repast of the stapled variety. Too bad. By now, after two hours behind the griddle, I was starting to get the hang of it.

At 11:30, a small girl, holding onto her mother's hand, peered up at my batter-splotched face.

"Do you want a free comic?" I inquired with a kindly smile.

She smiled back, just for an instant, looked up at her mother—who was looking through the stacks of comics—looked back at me, and began to bawl.

"WAAAAAH," she cried, as my mouth dropped open in horror.

Her mother looked down at her, and then back at me, frowning.

"Here, have a free comic," I said amidst the wailing cacophony. The kid kept bawling.

"Uh, take SEVEN free comics," I said, stuffing one of each into a bag.

Her mother snatched the bag from me and dragged her howling offspring over to a calendar display where the little tike finally was reduced to sniffles.

"What's up—did she eat one of your pancakes?" asked a pimply-faced fanthing as he scooped up a copy of *Spawn*.

Grrrrrr. The things I do for *Wizard*.

Next, a couple of guys who looked a little like two laid-off construction workers showed up, and promptly ordered a stack

of my finest.

"What's the deal with this?" said one guy.

I explained the subtle nuances, as he and his buddy poured on the syrup.

"I don't read comics," the other guy said while reaching for a napkin, "but I eat food."

I sighed and turned to stir my batter.

By 11:45, the pancake crowd had almost completely diminished, but we still had a small but steady stream of people grabbing comics. As we neared the closing minutes, I upped the ante by offering two free comics of one's choice. This was done as a public service to the comics community and to hopefully avoid any more pointless questions and comments. It proved, however, to be of no avail.

"I don't like comics and I'm not hungry," noted one kid. "Got anything else?"

I gave him some free advice: "Consider taking seventh grade over next year, kid."

It was almost noon and the final participants were packing up their free comics and full bellies when we got a visit from the last Bob Parker.

He was a slight lad, about 14, with a purple windbreaker on. On the front, in cursive script, was the embroidered name "Bob."

"Your last name wouldn't be Parker, by any chance, would it?" I asked, as he dug into the day's final flapjack.

"Mmph mmph," he nodded with a full mouth.

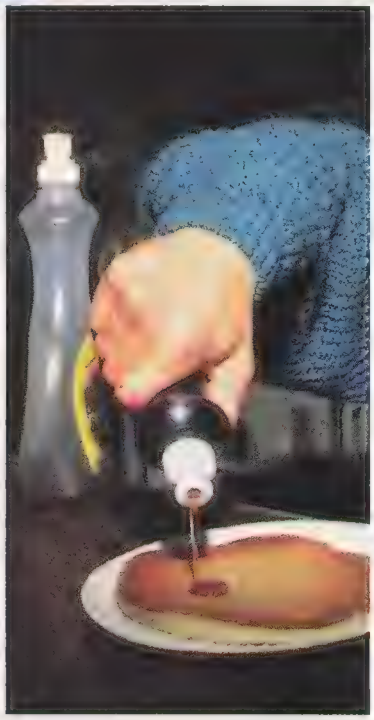
As author Kurt Vonnegut once said, some things only happen in real life, and bad fiction.

As I closed up shop and unplugged the skillet, I tallied up the day's numbers to see if comics indeed sold like hotcakes. I was certainly anxious for the answer.

Anyway, here are the final results:

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	**87**
Number that chose comics	**66**
Number that chose hotcakes	**21**
COMICS RATED IN ORDER OF POPULARITY:	
Uncanny X-Men	**34**
Spawn	**22**
Classic Star Wars	**17**
Batman Adventures	**13**
Batman: Shadow of the Bat	**1**

So, as you can tell from the numbers above, comics don't sell like hotcakes—they sell a heck of a lot better. This should be a relief to shop owners everywhere (and a nightmare to breakfast servers), but to be fair, we must consider the fact that if anyone besides me had been tossing the batter, the results might have been different. After all, it's a tough choice, eating my food or reading something like *Spawn*. To be honest, a choice like that would give me a serious case of indigestion either way.



Overall, it was a positive experience, even if I did have to endure two-and-a-half hours of insults and guffaws at the sweaty hands of Crystal's assembled comics readership.

Maybe if I'm lucky, those *Wizard* guys will let me keep the leftover comics and batter mix. And the syrup. ☆

John Seals, a freelance writer based in St. Paul, Minn., has a real tattoo, but wishes he didn't.

NO
GO
DOWN

Flash's Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn talk about the "new" Scarlet Speedster, and why death in comics can be a good thing.

By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

100th issues are generally moments for big events in comics, and DC Comics's *Flash* #100 is no different. Could it be that Wally West, the third character to bear the historic name of the Flash, is about to join the choir invisible, and be replaced by yet another Flash?

The title's editor, Brian Augustyn, and writer, Mark Waid, are somewhat less than forthcoming with answers to those questions—but they are more than willing to encourage the speculation. So, is Wally still the Flash?

"As of #100, no," answers Augustyn.

OK, then is Wally still alive?

"No," Waid replies, flatly. "Not apparently," Augustyn concedes, leading Waid to say, "Maybe, but not certainly."

Very well, what about both of those questions as of #101?

"I'm sorry, there seems to be some static on the line..." Waid replies, in an attempt to avoid the question.

Actually, there's a title change in the offing with #101, Augustyn points out. As of that issue, the name of the book changes from just *Flash* to *THE Flash*. "That's the first minor signal that things are being shaken up. We're changing the title of the book just slightly," Waid notes.

"Well, thank God we have a banner headline. Big changes in the wind: add article to logo," Augustyn laughs. He goes on to point out that the change is actually being made so that the cover logo will match what the first-page indicia has always said. "Actually, the addition of the article makes sense, because at that point whoever is in the suit will be, now and forever, *The* Flash, not just *a* Flash," Waid emphasizes.

With the trivia out of the way, we get to the nitty gritty, the really interesting questions: If Wally West *is* really dead, then why did they do it? To quote from somebody somewhere, "Killing off your main character is the last resort of a bad writer."

"Don't think I haven't mentioned this," Augustyn jests.

"Actually, I think the quote should be 'Killing off your main character is the last resort of a desperate company,'" Waid challenges, to which Augustyn responds, "I, of course, cannot officially sanction that line.

"The bottom line is I don't think that's true," the editor continues. "I don't think it is the last resort of a bad writer."

"If it is true," Waid notes, "then Arthur Conan Doyle is a hack." Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, had killed Holmes in a climactic "final" story and was forced to bring him back due to public demand.

"If the writer has done his job well and made you care about the main character, then whatever fate the writer gives that character has more impact because you care about that character," Augustyn explains. "Any change you put the character through is part of making that character more believable. Frankly, like it or not, people we like die unexpectedly."

Waid turns back to the original charge and offers a rethinking of it: "I think the act of killing off a *lame* character is the resort of a *bad* writer.

"However, Wally has gotten to be quite an acclaimed character, quite the favorite character. He places highly in the fan polls; in terms of DC characters, he comes in right behind Superman and Batman. People like Wally—"

Suddenly, afraid that they may be revealing their hand as to Wally's actual status, Augustyn jumps in: "It has to be said, though, that we're not copping to anything here," and then goes on to explain his thoughts in some detail. "This 'dead' thing is a subjective issue, considering his fate. We're establishing in 'Terminal Velocity' that there is a force, a dimensional containment of energy, that the speedsters draw upon—we're calling it the Speed Force, for want of something genuinely and compellingly interesting."

"It exists beyond the speed of light," Waid continues to explain. "It's not cognizant, it's not intelligent, but it is a natural force. That is where, for instance, Barry is."

Barry Allen? You mean Barry, Wally's predecessor as the Flash (and all-around nice guy), will be his successor, even though he's dead?

"No, that's where Barry's *essence* is," Augustyn insists.

"Exactly," Waid acknowledges. "Barry is not dead in the traditional sense, but he's *not* coming back."

"He's been reduced to energy," Augustyn says, "and that energy pattern is part of the larger force."

Then it's obvious that *Barry* is not Wally's replacement.

"I don't know if you can consider it obvious. The one thing Mark and I pride ourselves on, is we never deliver the obvious."

According to Augustyn and Waid, Wally West has been aware of this impending fate ever since *Zero Hour*, when he learned that in order to save girlfriend Linda Park's life, he would have to push himself to the limits of his ability...and that push would send him into the dreaded Speed Force.

Max Mercury—the veteran speedster whose history is also explored in this storyline—has tried to explain this to Wally several times, Waid says. "Max has brushed up against the Speed Force many times. This is where Max comes from. Max is a guy from the 1800s who got the speed powers with—at this point—no visible connection to any of the Flashes. Max is not Barry, not Impulse, not Wally. Max is Max.

"There's a point at which, as a speedster, he felt the calling—which all speedsters feel—of the Speed Force."

"All speedsters get their power by channeling this energy," Augustyn notes. "Up until now, unknowingly."

"Some [of them] have suspected," Waid

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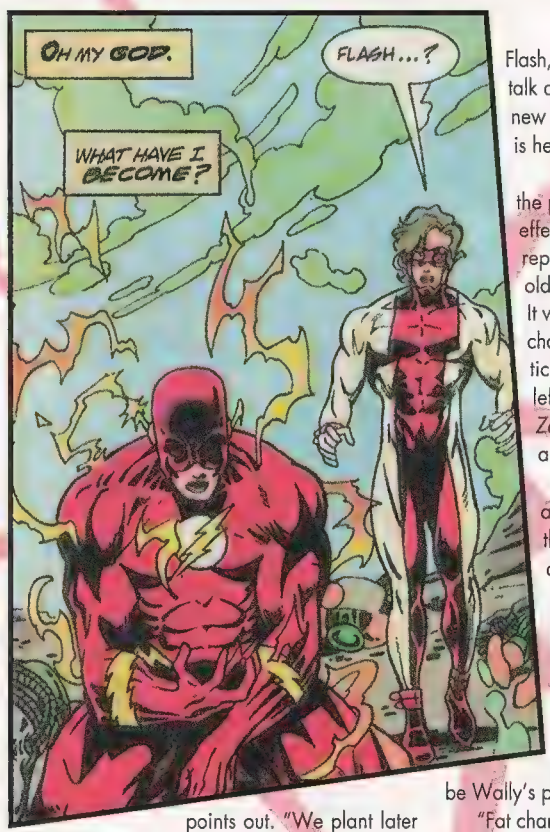


points out. "We plant later that Jay Garrick [the original Flash] has suspected that something like this existed. He's felt the calling in years past, but he's always ignored it—he has a wife, he has real strong ties to the world. Johnny Quick, on the other hand, has never been open-minded enough to really feel the calling.

"Max is the first person we've seen who has felt the calling and has tried to go," Waid continues. "He found himself in the same situation as Wally back in the 1800s. He sped forward, he knew this feeling of joy and ebullience as he reached light speed, then at the last second, he blinked. He got a little bit scared and, when he did, he was suddenly thrown away and was catapulted 30 years into the future.

"Now he's like a punch-drunk fighter; he knows he'll never really make it there. He's blown his shot. A large part of what binds him to Wally is that he sees the same moment of glory in Wally's future."

"There's an almost spiritual quality to what happens," offers Augustyn. "While it seems that entering the force ends individuality, you become one with this non-sentient force, there is this sense of glory just before you go. There's also the knowledge that you live on through any speedster who continues to use the energy—not consciously, but you're part of the power that binds them together."

Well, let's see. Wally joins with the Speed Force, but since the book is continuing, somebody will be operating as the Flash—the only Flash, as Waid and Augustyn say. Let's talk about the possibilities of who the new Flash could be. Jay Garrick—or is he too old?

"We've seen, over the years, that the power of speed may have some effect on how fast you age," Waid replies. "Jay has never seemed as old as some of his contemporaries. It would certainly be an interesting challenge. He is one of the only Justice Society of America members left standing after [the events of] *Zero Hour*—and that may not be a coincidence."

And, says Augustyn, "in #100, as a result of Wally's entrance into the Speed Force, for reasons we don't clearly explain, there is an increase in the available power."

"The very act of Wally entering the Speed Force cleared the channel to Earth," Waid explains. "So, if it were Jay, we could play with that," Augustyn admits.

The next possibility would be Wally's protégé Bart Allen, AKA Impulse.

"Fat chance," Waid answers quickly.

But Augustyn is more circumspect. "Nothing can be ruled out," he cautions. "In the same way I argue that Jay becomes young again, I could argue that Bart becomes Flash and somebody else becomes Impulse. It's not damned likely."

"I sadly grant that, at this moment, Bart is the darkest of the dark horses," Waid admits. (For more on Impulse, see the sidebar.)

Max Mercury is a possibility, but who wants it to be a character who has already admitted that he's frightened of going all the way to the edge?

"The upside of Max is that he's a really popular character—and a blank slate," Waid says. "It would be foolish to incorporate him into the storyline and then do nothing with him."

"I think you have to consider that he's not afraid of the edge—he simply hasn't been able to attain it again," Augustyn says.

Before getting to the one considered the most likely, let's rule out all the other established speedsters: the members of the Russian super-speedsters, Kapitalist Couriers?

"No," Waid and Augustyn respond in unison.

Hmm, didn't think so. How 'bout the mutate speedsters Blue Trinity or the one member who was renamed Lady Flash?

"No—but we have plans for all these guys," Waid points out.

Johnny Quick?

Waid grins. "Let's throw them a bone: definitely not Johnny Quick."

OK then, staying in that family—his daughter, Jesse Quick?

"She really would be good for the job, wouldn't she?" Waid counters quickly. "At the end of #97, Wally says to Impulse, 'You were up for the job, but you're just not ready,' and he turns to Jesse and says, 'You're it.' On the cover of #98, she's wearing a version of the costume.

"Jesse has ties to the Flash legacy, to the Justice Society, and the Justice League," he continues. "She's been a player in the DC Universe for a while. She's a likable character—open and learning constantly. Jesse has a quest for knowledge, an interest in learning about speedsters. She's been doing a lot of homework, studying the whole field of speed and heroics in general. She wants to know more about where her powers come from.

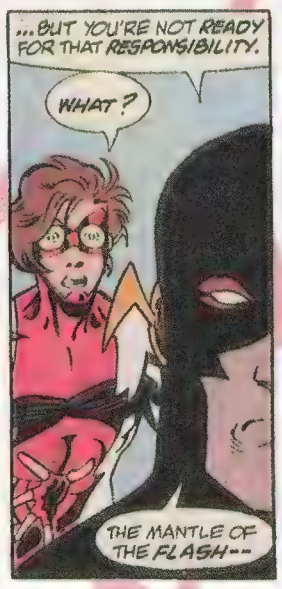
"We're also in an era where female heroes seem to be a lot more accepted by readers than they were five or six years ago." Waid stops for a moment. "You know, it could be somebody who has never had super-speed before. And I'll give you a hint: it ain't Iris [West, Impulse's grandmother]."

"Or Chunk," Augustyn speedily adds, referring to the rather large supporting cast member.

But then, if you're not going to pull a character out of thin air—

"I wouldn't do that," Waid jumps in to say.

We thought you were a better writer than that, Mark. "But not such a good writer that



At top: Wally knows that the end is quickly approaching. Right: The lightning is passed onto Jesse...or is it?

you wouldn't kill your main character," Augustyn laughs.

That pretty much leaves only Linda Park in that non-powered category. "I'd say that's true," Waid concedes.

Not one to let anything be taken for granted, Augustyn suggests, "On your list of suspects, if you're going to include Barry and Jay, you have to consider the possibility that it *could* be Wally." Would that then be a new Flash, or simply an improved current Flash? "I didn't say that it *was* [Wally]—and I don't have an answer to that question. I know that in the materials we've developed to promote this, if we're going to be fair, we have to consider the entire list."

"Regardless of who is in the suit, even if it is Wally—" Waid begins.

"—coming out of the other side of the new knowledge and self-knowledge that comes with the ultimate power—" Augustyn continues.

" —would make it a new character," Waid concludes.

The changes don't end with the writing, however, Augustyn points out. There's a new artist coming into the mix: Spaniard Oscar Jimenez.

"We used Carlos Pacheco for some fill-ins, and he'll be part of #99 and #100, as well," the editor says. "He's no longer available, but we've discovered somebody within Pacheco's circle of people—a bright, brand-new guy named Oscar Jimenez, who lives in Barcelona and worked with Carlos on several Marvel UK projects.

"Oscar learned everything he knows from Carlos, so we continue that sense of evolution in our art: [Mike] Wieringo to Pacheco to Jimenez is very much a natural progression."

The combination of Jimenez and inker Jose Marzan Jr. may finally permit Augustyn to deliver on a promise made ever since Wally put on the red suit just after *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. "Oscar's developing some ways to illustrate speed in ways I hadn't seen before and, working with Marzan, who is also a computer artist, we're using those skills to portray speed in ways we couldn't before: blurred images, for example. Over the years, previous editors on *Flash* have promised that and not delivered, but we're actually going to do it this time."

Noting that after *Flash* #100, they are calling their character the "ultimate Flash," Waid and Augustyn claim that, whoever is in the suit, it will be the beginning of a new era.

They go on to say that this "ultimate Flash" will exhibit all the abilities previously shown by Jay Garrick, Barry Allen, and Wally West—*plus*. As an example, they explain what happens the first time the "new" Flash tries the trick of vibrating through a solid object.

"The ultimate Flash is surrounded by a kinetic energy that is siphoned off the Speed Force, and the faster the Flash moves, the more energy there is," Waid points out. "So, when the Flash tries to vibrate through a tree, it's successful. But the Flash looks back and sees that there's a lingering kinetic energy that clings to the tree—and it explodes. It's like microwaving it."

"The Flash can move through things, but has no control over the force that is left behind. That could be conquered in time," Augustyn notes.

"A big focus of the next few issues is the Flash learning how to deal with the newer powers, learning the boundaries," Waid says. "The Speed Force doesn't come with an instruction manual."

What about a new costume?

"I think no matter who's in the suit, the basic design will remain the same," Waid responds. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Gee, could that last comment apply even to the speculation about Wally being replaced?

Waid goes on to say that the focus of the next stretch of stories is how the supporting cast deals with the aftermath of "Terminal Velocity" and the new Flash. "The status quo has changed, because the constant challenge of the ultimate Flash is straddling the line between being a normal human and being a super-speed god. Wally had pretty much figured out his place in between the two worlds—"

"But toward the end, he found out there was so much more to it," finishes Augustyn.

"Whoever is wearing the suit, if they were a speedster before, they were riding a tricycle up 'til now; now they've got a Ferrari," Waid concludes, metaphorically.

All this leads to another obvious question: why now? *Flash* has, over the past year or so, improved its market standing. People are talking about it; people are interested in it. It's growing back into a fan favorite. Why mess with it?

"I don't think we're messing with anything," Augustyn argues. "If you look back at what we've done to bring us to our current position—if we are in fact enjoying a resurgence of fan favoritism and critical acclaim—it's because it's an evolutionary and ongoing process. We have been moving the characters forward. Mark is doing a great job at making the readers care about these characters. If we just let them go on neutral, it stops being interesting.

Will Jesse live up to the lightning? Does Max know something he's not telling us?

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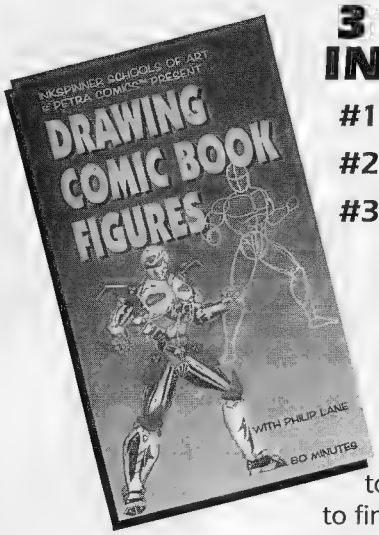

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Impulse—the fastest attitude alive—is a young speedster from the future.

We have to always be growing; not the illusion of growth, but genuine growth."

"Speaking as a writer, as a part of the marketplace, I feel the pressure of finding ways of doing amazing story arcs, marketing hooks, things we can really pump," Waid explains, "because we have been noticed and the sales have been creeping up and up with each issue. It's been great, but—especially coming up on #100—we needed to do something that would create some serious interest."

Augustyn takes the editorial long view: "Looking back over what we've done since about #75, it's all about one arc that tops the previous arc, that tops the previous arc. We've been growing the characters forward, moving them through major trials and tribulations—all of which is part of making them interesting, keeping us and the readers part of the lives of our characters.

"We think of this as a stop along the evolutionary trail of the characters."

However, if you are switching the identity of your main title character, haven't you permanently stopped the evolution of your main character and begun an entirely new subject, sort of?

"Keep in mind that we treat the powers of the Flash as a heritage, and that the story, as far as we're concerned—from Jay to Barry to Wally to whoever is next—is all really one story," Augustyn answers. "It's about the person who wears the lightning."

"We've certainly made the book a book about Wally; but over the 50-year history of the Flash, the one thing we have going for us is that idea of heritage," Waid sums up. "The name and the suit are an honor that will be passed through the generations. That's not true of Superman or Batman or even Green Lantern, anymore." ☆

Wizard Contributing Editor Patrick Daniel O'Neill is old enough to remember reading the "Flash of Two Worlds" story when it was first published.

ACTING ON IMPULSE

"*Flash* is a book about a character who is fully into the responsibility of being a hero in a world that needs that hero," says editor Brian Augustyn. "*Impulse* is a book about a character learning to someday be that hero."

Bart Allen, the grandson of the Silver Age Flash, the legendary Barry Allen, is Impulse, the speedster originally from the 30th century who acts before he thinks—and he can act pretty quickly. Introduced in the pages of *Flash* #92 last year, Impulse is getting his own series in March.

"*Impulse* is also as much about Bart Allen, school student, as it is about the costumed identity," adds writer Mark Waid. "Quite frankly, we spend a lot more time with Bart and his personal life than we ever did with Wally and his personal life."

In order to accomplish that, Augustyn, Waid, and artist Humberto Ramos (*Hardware, Superboy*) are moving Bart out of Keystone City, Wally West's home base. Going along for the ride will be veteran speedster Max Mercury. "We're setting up a sort of *Karate Kid* dynamic between them—the Zen master and the impetuous, impatient, bouncing-off-the-walls youth," Waid explains. "Max smartly decides to take Bart away from a place with a lot of supervillain activity, and to a place with a lot of wide-open space—down south to Alabama. Not just because of those things, but because part of the Zen process is to take this kid with this incredibly fast attitude and impatient lifestyle, to a part of the country where things just naturally move at a slower pace."

"Not incidentally," Augustyn interjects, "that part of the country is where Mark [Waid] has his roots."

"He's actually going to my hometown and my neighborhood," says Waid.

According to the writer, Max's job is to teach Bart how to live among normal humans, "or at least to make an effort," Waid notes. "Bart has no patience, no interest in assimilating into the world. He would rather the world assimilate into him."

Questioned further on the differences between the speedsters, Waid replies, "Wally has always been the most accessible character at DC, to a certain extent, because we've always been in his head; the captions are always from his point of view. Impulse is exactly the opposite. Impulse doesn't even have a thought balloon. He goes straight from thought to deed."

"It may go from observation to deed," Augustyn throws in.

"We never get into his head. He may talk about what he's doing or how he feels—to Max—from time to time, but he's not a particularly reflective character," Waid continues. "The trick to writing Impulse is to always make him do stuff you wouldn't expect him to do. By now, we know what Superman or Batman would do in a situation, because we know them so well—"

"—But even Impulse doesn't know what Impulse is going to do," Augustyn sums up.

Sounds like Bart Allen could be a pretty obnoxious character. How do you get a readership to follow and appreciate such a character?

"Hey, you're talking to the guys who made people like Wally," Waid laughs. "If we made you like Wally, we can make you like anybody."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

WIZARD
CONTEST
Love Bites!
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What would Valentine's Day be without some PASSION? That's exactly what hot heroine Vampirella is dealing with these days—she's got a wild new enemy on her hands, the bloodthirsty vigilante vixen named...

Passion

She starts her killing spree in *Vengeance of Vampirella* #12, and our favorite blood-sucking babe tries to bring her down!

So what the heck does that have to do with you? Well, since Passion's making Vampi's life miserable, the folks at Harris Comics and *Wizard* thought it'd be a good idea to have Vampi's fans cheer her up with some Valentine's Day poems—and WIN some mighty cool stuff in return!

Grand Prize (One winner)

An original piece of framed art featuring those two scantily clad heartthrobs, Vampirella and her new foe Passion, drawn by Buzz!

Second Prize (25 winners)

A copy of *Vengeance of Vampirella* #12, Passion's first appearance, signed by Kirk Van Wormer.

That Lovely Legal Text

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Harris Comics, their immediate families, and that little red-haired girl who's always dissin' Charlie Brown. What's her deal? Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry along with your poem to Vampirella's Valentine Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Any entries deemed obscene by the judges will be automatically disqualified. Decision of the judges are final. Don't those boxes of Valentine's Day chocolates really suck? You never know what's in those li'l candies until after you've bitten into 'em, and by then it's too late and you're stuck eating coconut! Yecch! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by April 28, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Wizard Press and Harris Comics will choose the winners based on creativity and originality. The winners will be chosen on May 1, 1995 by Wizard Press and Harris Comics.

For the names of the winners, available after May 19, 1995 send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Vampirella's Valentine Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard!*

Vampirella, Passion, and Harris and Passion Logo's ™ & © Harris Publications Inc.

So who do ya have to send roses and chocolates to ta win this here contest? Actually, what you need to do is write a romantic Valentine's Day poem for Vampirella. Y'know, get all mushy and stuff. For instance:

"Vampi, my sweet,
You're certainly a sight,
But as far as dates go,
You really bite."

And remember, it's a Valentine's Day poem, so be original and creative. But hey, don't go getting all lewd and stuff, 'cause *any* and *all* obscene entries will be automatically disqualified (ah well, there go about 80 percent of the entries). Also, remember that the lines in your poem don't necessarily have to rhyme!

Anyway, send your love poem along with the coupon below to:

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—art by Michael Golden

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the Drawing board

The showcase of comic book fan art.

Taking another break from the regular Drawing Board department (Geez, we haven't run a regular installment of Drawing Board since #40!), we are proud to present the winners to *Wizard* #38's "Win Jim's Art Table" contest! Ken Rocafort, our Grand Prize winner, takes home a set of art supplies and the grand daddy of all art prizes, Jim Lee's art table! Yeah, you heard that right, Jim's art table! Way to go, Ken! (Our other winners also won some neat prizes, but they're nowhere near as cool as the art table, so we won't list 'em.)

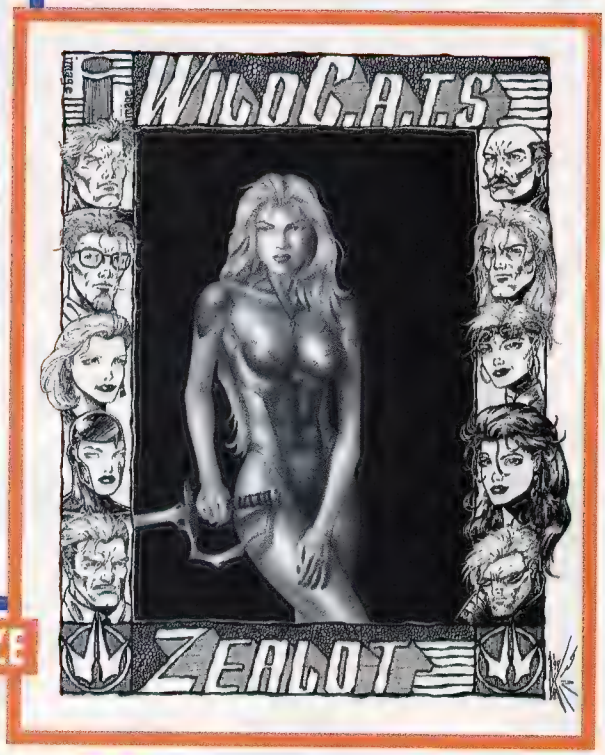
GRAND PRIZE

By Kenneth Rocafort
Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

All WildC.A.T.s characters ™ & © Aegis Entertainment DBA WildStorm Productions. Jim Lee photo by Al Ortega.

SECOND PRIZE

By Rafael Garrés Cervantes
Barcelona, Spain

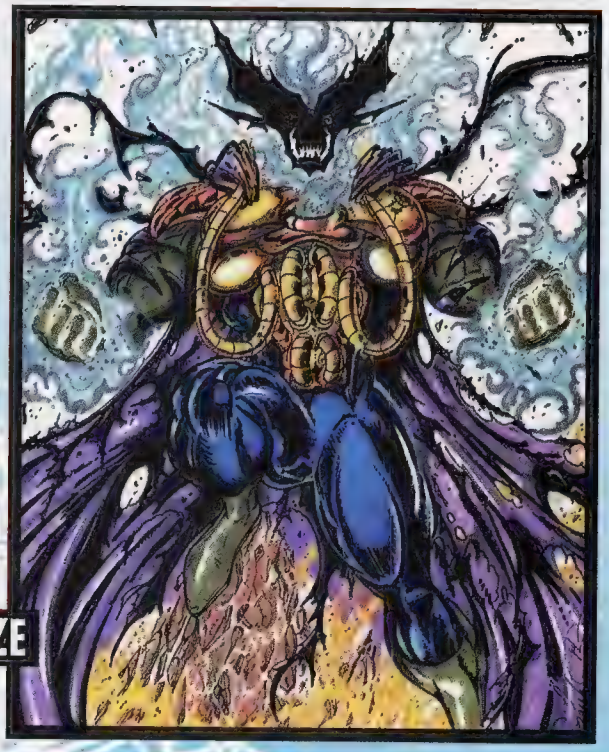


SECOND PRIZE

By Daniel Ting
Sacramento, CA

THIRD PRIZE

By Raymond Lai
Kirkland, Montreal, Canada



THIRD PRIZE

By Frank Alexis Jr.
Brooklyn, NY

THIRD PRIZE

By Aaron Messisco
Honolulu, HI

THIRD PRIZE

By Douglas Smith
Houston, TX

THIRD PRIZE

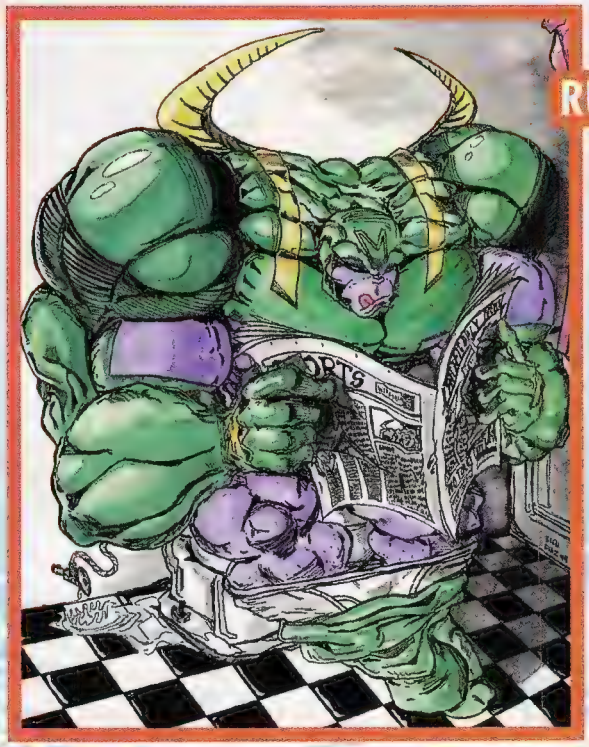
By Eric Villanueva
Sugarland, TX

RUNNER-UP

By Frantz Mathurin
East Orange, NJ

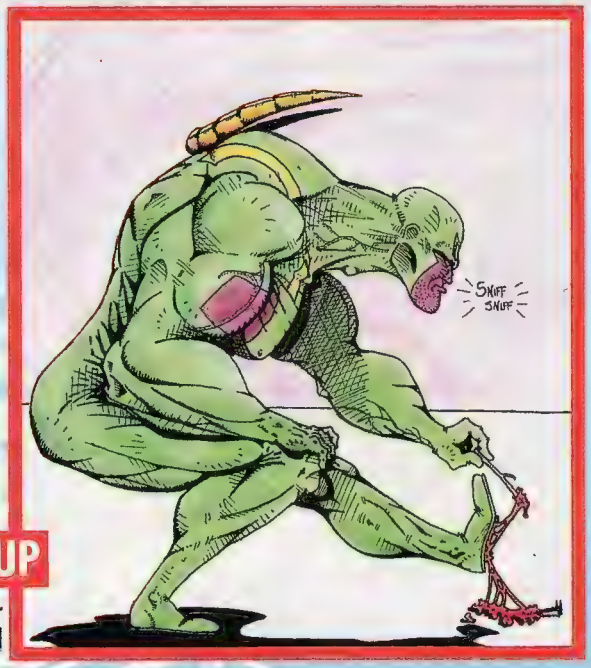
RUNNER-UP

By Bob Dill
Davenport, OK



RUNNER-UP

By Richard Pasion Diaz
Dededo, Guam



RUNNER-UP

By Brad Taylor
Bristol, NH

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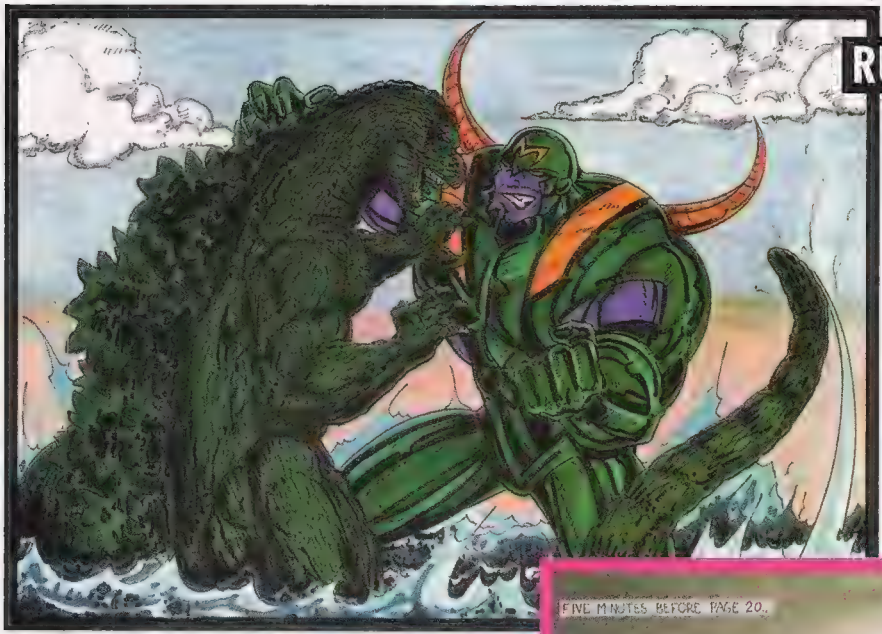
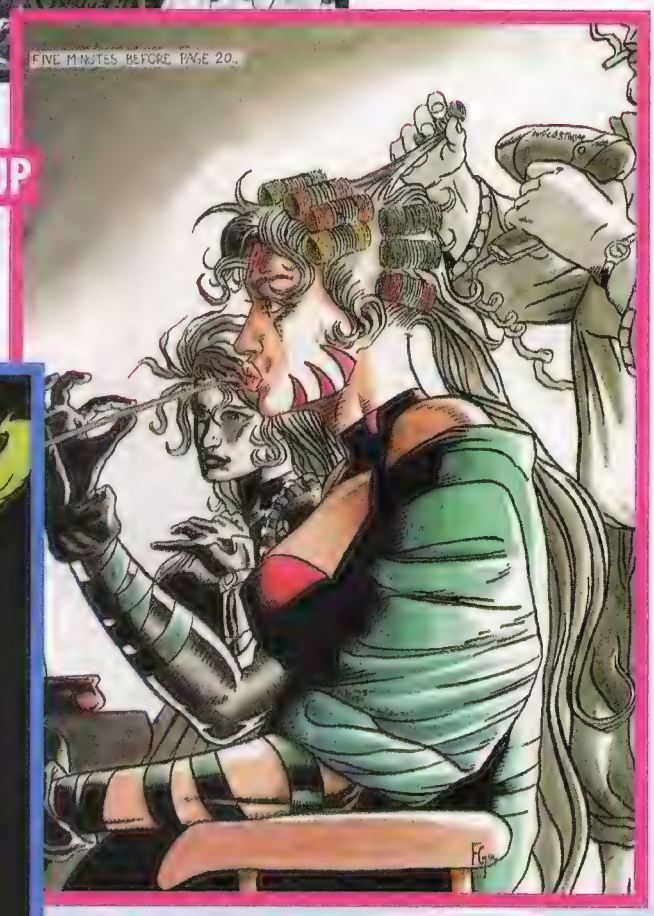


RUNNER-UP

By Jim Buchanan
Long Beach, CA



RUNNER-UP

By Fred Grivaud
Auxerre, France

RUNNER-UP

By Al Dumo
Seattle, WA

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CUT & PRINT

Spawn: The Movie, courtesy of New Line Cinema and I.L.M.

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

Heroes On Screen

Apparently, now seems to be the time for the Image titles to prosper on the screen. *Spawn* is currently at New Line Cinema with a script in progress. As to who the screenwriter and director are, well, that's still a mystery, since mum's the word from everyone over at Toddyville. The project is slated to go into production in 1996, with ILM doing all of the special effects—so expect the character of Spawn to be completely, 100 percent computer-generated. McFarlane insisted that ILM, the company that produced the graphics for *Jurassic Park*, be part of the project.

Also on the slate is the prospect of a *Spawn* animated series for HBO. No details yet on this baby; it's still in the negotiation stage.

Cyberforce will be an animated series next season on Fox. A six-part mini-series airs on Saturday mornings next season.

The Man of Steel returns to the small screen in 1996 as *Superman: The Animated Series* will be produced with Warner Bros. and Fox. Some of the folks who worked on the Bat-toon, including producer/animator Bruce Timm, will be in on the project; as a result, it should be much like *Batman: The Animated Series*.

Marvel's Daredevil film is currently over at 20th Century Fox with director Chris Columbus (who is also helming the new *Fantastic Four* movie) and producers Ben Myron, Tony Ludwig, and Alan Riche, the same trio involved in the big-screen *Bonanza* film and *The Mod Squad* with Aaron Spelling over at MGM.

While everyone and their uncle is producing animated films for kids, Hanna-Barbera is choosing not to go that route; instead, the company is moving into the feature animated film department—features for a more adult audience. Up first are Steve Rude and Mike Baron's *Nexus*, *Werewolf to the Moon*, and the ever-popular *Space Ghost*.

Judge Dredd, however, will be a cartoon series next year, following the live-action movie starring Sylvester Stallone. No production company has been assigned yet.

—Dave Galvan

MorphiN' ProhiBiteD in the Great north

YTV, a children's cable network that carried *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* in Canada, has canceled the series in response to a decision by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. According to the council, the program violated a number of provisions of the anti-violence code set forth at the insistence of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, the country's equivalent to the U.S. Federal Communications Commission.

In a related move, Global Television, a Canadian broadcast network, is reportedly talking with the *Rangers*'s producer, Saban Entertainment, about ways to make the show conform to Canadian criteria. If that can't be done, Global will have to state over prime-time airings that the show

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violates the new violence standards.

The alleged violations include the provision that, on *Power Rangers*, violence is not a contributing factor in the development of either plot or characters and is depicted as the only method of resolving conflict. In addition, no one suffers physical consequences from the violent acts. "It presents a risk-free option," says Ronald Cohen, chairman of the standards council. "This is not the sort of thing we want to encourage in children."

Other countries have previously acted against the *Power Rangers*: New Zealand's broadcasting authority banned it in September, and TV-3, a satellite service to Scandinavia, suspended the show earlier in 1994.

Saban argued that the series is "essentially a live-action cartoon, with battles between good and evil enacted in a fantasy world," and insisted that the show contained "strong positive messages" that encourage "pro-social behavior."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

d & d: the movie

A movie version of the popular role-playing and video game *Dungeons & Dragons* is a go. But don't look for the projected $50 million mixture of live-action and computer animation anytime soon.

"At this point we're looking at a minimum of 9 to 12 months development time," said Courtney Solomon, co-partner in Sweetpea Entertainment, the production studio that purchased the rights to make the movie. "The earliest this movie will reach theaters is either summer or Christmas '96, or summer '97."

Dungeons and Dragons: The Movie.

Early development on the film includes the involvement of the effects house, Digital Domain, and, of particular interest, the active participation of special effects superstar Stan Winston (*Jurassic Park*). "Winston will have a role in this film beyond special effects. Directing second unit or possibly directing is something we've discussed. A production credit for Stan is also a possibility," reported Solomon.

Written by Topper Lilien and Carroll Cartwright, the script is "a quest story," according to Solomon.

"The main character starts off as a rogue who gets involved in the politics of who controls the dragons in the *Dungeons & Dragons* world. The climax of the film consists of a dragon battle in the sky."

The film, projected at a 50-75 day schedule with possible locations in Canada or Mexico, will feature an unknown cast (with possible star cameos), an action-effects-experienced director, at least 12 new *D&D*-oriented creatures, and, according to Solomon, "Dragons. Lots of dragons."

—Marc Shapiro

the tick

The history of the *Tick* is an exercise in slow, and the tortoise in this comic book-to-television-animated-series race is none other than Tick creator Ben Edlund.

"Most people can do 12 issues of a book in a year," chuckled Edlund, whose Tick comic began in 1988, published by New England Comics. "I did 12 issues in five years. I was notoriously irregular, but I was never penalized because we had a very high readership when an issue did get out."

Readership, as often happens in the comic book biz, often mutates into TV interest, and so, before the dust even came close to settling on Edlund's 12-issue *Tick* run, the small screen was knocking. Fox knocked hardest and, beginning in September '94, began unspooling the first of 13 half-hour episodes of Edlund's unconventional superhero. But the speed requirements of TV have impacted Edlund, who is both storyboarding and co-writing the show, in a major way.

Hang out with the Tick on Fox.

"I felt I was going pretty fast by storyboard standards," said Edlund, "but I found that I was screwing up their schedule. I'm nowhere up to the speed that television requires."

The Tick, which recently swelled its episode number with a Fox order for 10 more shows, has adopted veteran comic artist Mike Ploog to assist with storyboards, while Richard Liebmann Smith will co-write the scripts with Edlund. Voice-over talent has been first-rate, with Townsend Coleman as the Tick, Mickey Dolenz as Arthur, Kay Lenz as American Maid, Cam Clarke as Die Fledermaus, Jess Harnell as Sewer Urchin, and, in a guest shot, Roddy McDowall as the villainous Breadmaster.

Edlund offers that *The Tick* animated series, courtesy of those production folks at Graz Entertainment, is a loose adaptation of the comic books—and with the nature of the books, loose was the only way to go.

"The way I was writing the comic was kind of anti-plot," said Edlund. "My plots were kind of like a car pushed down a hill and slowly drifting to a stop. Television requires a self-powered auto. I wouldn't mind screwing around with a

Dungeons & Dragons ™ & © TSR Inc. The Tick ™ & © Ben Edlund.

plotless TV show, but that makes television executives nervous, and nervous executives don't put money into plotless television shows.

"The show is a pretty good take on the comic," he continued. "We're limited in some ways by broadcast standards and practices. In one show we had a lounge full of superhero sidekicks, and it was subtly indicated that they were sexually involved with their superheroes. It was a quiet thing, but we could come nowhere near that for TV and so, a lot of the jokes had to change. The darker, and what I consider the more interesting, elements of *The Tick* had to be translated into something less overt. But, fortunately, the Tick is basically such an innocent that we've had to change very little about him."

Edlund's TV *Tick* experience is a flurry of images. "Going out to Los Angeles and meeting Mickey Dolenz was a kick. I've been particularly happy with Townsend Coleman as the voice of the Tick. I felt going in that whoever did the Tick was going to need a lot of direction, but Townsend has really brought a lot to the character. The scripts have taken an average of two to four weeks to write."

For those arriving late on *The Tick* story, Edlund got the inspiration for the character in 1986. "The character's just based on this joke my friends and I were throwing around. I kept running with the idea of this whacked-out character, and eventually it evolved into something that could stand on its own and that required nobody to make fun of it."

Edlund, who at the time was involved with another project with New England Comics, did some preliminary sketches of the Tick. "The publisher saw one of the sketches I had done and said, 'Why don't you do a quick comic book of the Tick?'"

Through the life of the comic, Edlund remained unfazed by its popularity. "The Tick was always more of a lark than anything else. I was always like, 'Cool! Let's see where it goes.'"

Interest in taking *The Tick* to the screen, big or small, began in 1990 as Edlund and a myriad of film and television production people did the development dance.

"There was always interest, but not serious enough interest," he reflected. "But one of the more persistent suitors, Kiscom, finally took *The Tick* and, in April 1993, struck a deal with the always edgy Fox Television Network." The TV success of the Tick has resulted in Edlund considering a return to *Tick* comics. But not too seriously. "I've considered it, but I have a history of not being real prolific where comics are concerned. I like what I've done with the comics but, at this point, I can take it or leave it."

Nor is he real solid on the importance of the Tick in his life.

"The Tick is a gag," he said. "A real long-running gag that, through the TV show, now has some depth. But it's not like I want the Tick on my tombstone as my major accomplishment."

But finally, it is a laughing Edlund who hedges his bet. "Well, maybe I'll give him a corner of my tombstone if he manages to pay for an entire empire."

—M.S.

Casper the Friendly Ghost and company are back with a new television series.

Harvey returns to animation with Universal

Harvey Entertainment Co. and Universal Pictures have signed a deal establishing a new animation studio on the Universal lot, the Harvey Universal Animation Co.

Jeffrey Montgomery, Harvey's chief executive officer, said Universal is financing the venture with Harvey, offering its library of classic comic book and cartoon characters, such as Casper the Friendly Ghost and Richie Rich. Historically, Harvey began as a comic book company and ventured into animation in the 1950s, when it acquired rights to a number of characters originally created by Paramount Pictures, including Casper and Little Dot.

The new animation studio will initially develop two television series based on the Casper and Richie Rich characters beginning in early 1995. A live-action *Richie Rich* movie, starring Macaulay Culkin, was released this past Christmas, while a Casper movie, produced by Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, is slated to open Memorial Day weekend in 1995.

Montgomery went on to say that Harvey is also talking with the major broadcast networks regarding possible Casper and Richie Rich TV shows, and that the company has enjoyed unexpected success with its animated series, *The Baby Huey Show*. There have been previous network series based on Casper and Richie Rich, most recently produced by Hanna-Barbera under license from Harvey.

For the end of 1995 and beyond, Harvey is considering re-launching classic characters such as Hot Stuff and Wendy the Good Little Witch, among others.

Harvey's comic publishing is currently on hold, although it has licensed Marvel Comics to produce and distribute comics based on its characters.

—P.D.O.

etc.

Daria, the popular female character on *Beavis and Butt-Head*, will be spun off into her own series next year.

—D.G. ☆

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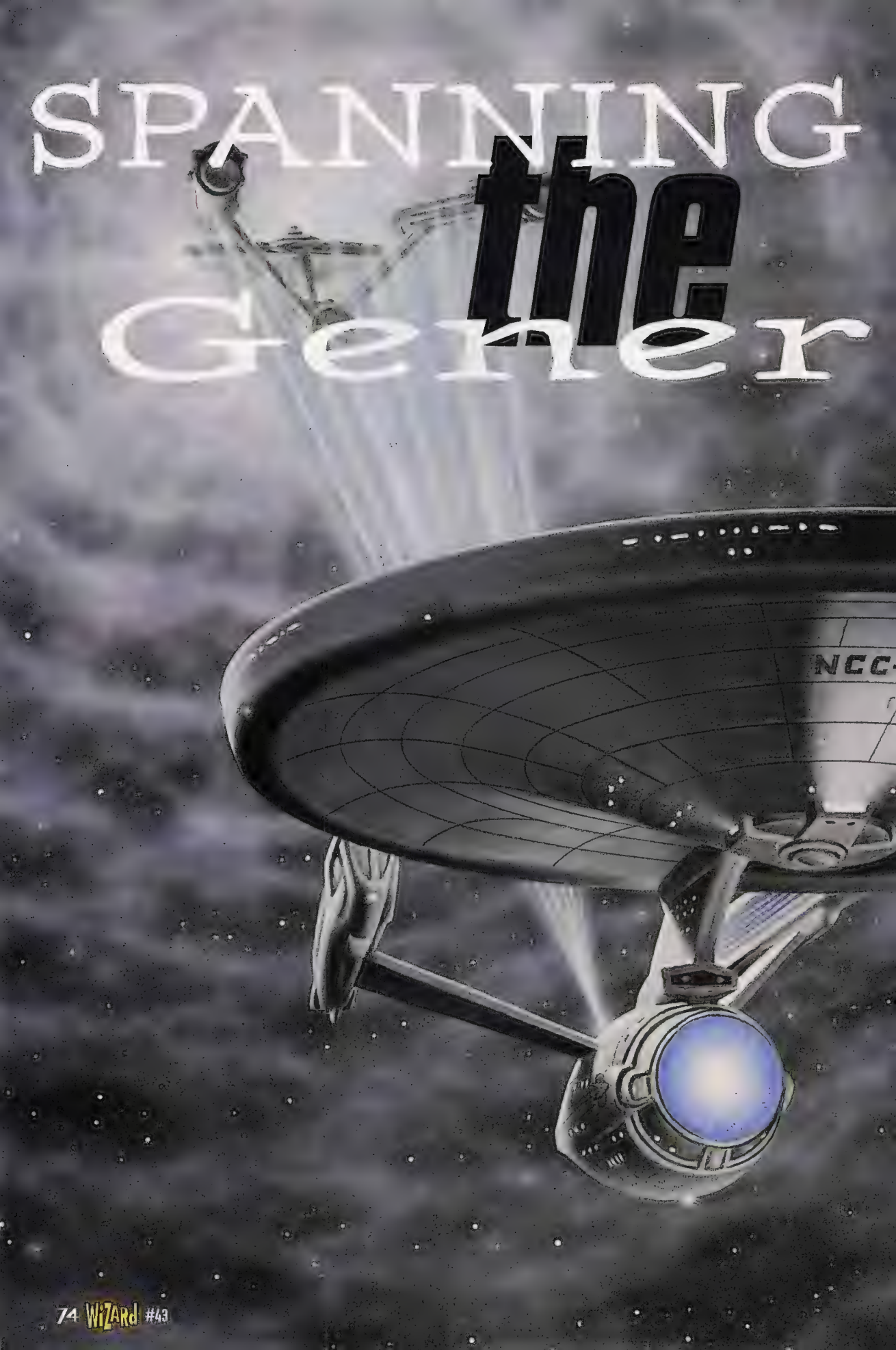


THE CREATORS BEHIND DC AND MALIBU'S POPULAR *STAR TREK* BOOKS SPILL THE BEANS ON WHAT'S TO COME.

by Marc Shapiro

ations

the editors, writers, and artists playing with Gene Roddenberry's toys expect the calls. After all, it is *Star Trek* and it is a licensed product. But the calls to the DC Comics and Malibu Comics offices concerning the *Star Trek* books often go into the realm of the downright hilarious. They even include calls from some of the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* actors themselves.

"Patrick Stewart is particular about the length of his hair," relates *Star Trek* novelist and comic book writer Michael Jan Friedman.

"Marina Sirtis used to get real upset because she felt the artists were making her look like a 50-year-old woman," reports Gordon Purcell, penciler of various *Star Trek* titles. "She's much happier these days."

In regards to "Classic" *Trek* actors, Purcell notes that a recent call from Walter Koenig went beyond the normal questions of appearances. "It was before the *Generations* movie came out, and he knew DC was doing the adaptation of the movie. So he called to find out how much of his part was still in the comic book." Apparently Koenig wanted to know how much of his part was still in the film, and since he couldn't get any answers from Paramount, he figured that since DC was doing an adaptation of the movie, everything that was in the comic book would have to have been taken straight from the film.

One constant in the ever-increasing *Star Trek* multimedia universe is that DC and Malibu are continually churning out comic book titles. And what remains equally predictable is the ever-present specter of Paramount and its tough-but-fair hold on the license.

"The difficult part of doing *Star Trek* is getting the approvals," declares Mark Paniccia, editor of Malbu's *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and the upcoming *Star Trek: Voyager*. "*Star Trek* is a big universe, and you have to make sure everything works."

Friedman, for his part, claims that familiarity breeds a certain amount of freedom. "I've been doing this long enough that I have a sense of what Paramount likes and doesn't like. I'm not going to take things to a length that would upset them."

DC *Trek* editor Margaret Clark brings the whole licensing question back to the toy analogy. "I equate doing *Star Trek* with being able to go to a rich kid's house and play with his toys, but being told not to mess them up."

Upcoming from Malibu on the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* front with issue #17 is a tale of a former Cardassian spy whose retirement is jeopardized by the label of freak brought on by her Cardassian features. Dax falls in love in *DS9* #18, while a problem with a wormhole caused by the presence of an old Romulan star core drive echoes of classic *Trek* elements. *DS9* issues #23-#25, with their emphasis on a Bajoran political-religious entanglement, is currently causing a bit of a problem for the folks at Malibu.

"These issues are leading up to the 25th anniversary, so it's been kind of difficult," relates Paniccia. "Paramount is still trying to establish all this stuff and we're still messing around with it. Both sides are working real hard to make this storyline work and not mess up a future storyline."

Star Trek: Voyager is turning out to be a different problem altogether. Delays in the completion and the filming of the pilot script, plus the last-minute casting change from Genevieve Bujold to Kate Mulgrew as Captain Kathryn Janeway, have caused fits and starts to the new television series. Bumps in the road that have, consequently, slowed Malibu's buggy. The company is presently planning to debut the series sometime in '95, but has confirmed that an earlier three-part Maquis adventure will fill in the gap before the ongoing series.

"Our plans are to do an adaptation of the pilot script so we can get the foundation in stone with the comic," reports the editor. "From there, we plan to take it on with all-new adventures. But things are really shut tight with *Voyager* at this point. We have character descriptions and a script. We're ready to run with this right now. But right now, we're sitting at the starting line."

Over at DC, editor Clark is leading things off with a one-issue adaptation of the *Star Trek: Generations* movie. Issues #72-#75 of DC's *Star Trek*, featuring the original Enterprise crew, will detail and explore the relationship between Kirk and the mother of his only child, Carol Marcus, in what the editor promises will become a year-long odyssey. The other DC title, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, boldly goes into a five-issue story arc with issues #71-#75, in a tale where Tholians and the Borg threaten the peace of the Federation through the destruction of Klingon and Federation outposts. An upcoming annual will feature a rare crossover between

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE, and STAR TREK: VOYAGER and all related characters ™ & © Paramount Pictures.

Left: Damn it, fans. It's classic dialogue! Below: The torch is passed, in the *Generations* movie adaptation.

the "Classic" crew and *Next Generation*'s in which Spock and Data meet in a story involving the threat of a time-traveling species on a rampage through the timeline.

Both Paniccia and Clark's approach to editing the multitude of *Star Trek* universes is founded in the original creator's vision of the series. "The most important thing I can do is try and stay true to the type of stories Gene Roddenberry would have told," offers Clark. Beyond that mutual admiration, however, each *Trek* essentially varies by the book.

"With *Deep Space Nine*, the approach from the beginning was to look for storylines and plots that captured the spirit of what was going on in the original *Star Trek* series," says Paniccia. "The reason I did that was because I felt the series, in the beginning, alienated itself from a lot of *Star Trek* lore. I wanted to make sure that there would be something recognizably '*Star Trek*' to the comics. Our approach has changed as time has gone on because the show has become more developed and taken on a lot of the original *Star Trek* tone. The show's changes have helped us out in that we can now do stories in the comics that reflect what's going on in the series, which is something we never want to stray too far from."

For the folks at Malibu, however, *Star Trek: Voyager* is still pretty much a blank slate. Paniccia feels that, much like *Deep Space Nine*, the *Voyager* books will be slow to produce a true breakout character.

"The Captain and First Officer will obviously [each] have a major role. But we don't feel any one character will be superdominant. At least, in the beginning, we'll try to play all of them and see what happens. Storywise, we're going to go with a lot of two- and three-part story arcs with an emphasis on cliffhanger endings. All the writers have all the information I have. But we're all ready to change things at a moment's notice."

If anybody has a leg up on the current *Voyager* start, it's *Star Trek*-journalist-turned-*Star Trek*-comic-book-writer Mark Altman. Altman, who has already penned *Deep Space Nine* issues #8 and #9, the four-part *Hearts and Minds* mini-series, the *Lightstorm* sequel to *Hearts and Minds* for a 48-page special, and the *Maquis* mini-series, recently completed a *Voyager* prequel for *DS9* #18, which, explains Altman, "sets up the premise of *Voyager*, but does not contain any of the characters.

"Having so little background on the show and its characters, the challenge is to find the voices and do things with the books that won't conflict with the [TV] series," he continues. "My feeling at this point is that characters like the Captain and [Lt.] Tom Paris will be easy to write for, and the Neelix [a bizarre and cunning alien, who is the ship's cook] shouldn't be too difficult because [he is] your basic scrounger."

Altman's biggest challenge with *DS9* is making sure that the voices are correct. "You've got to be consistent with what these characters are doing on the show. When I have a Quark and Odo dialogue going on, I sometimes find myself asking, 'Did they have this conversation on TV or did I just make it up?' Another thing we've had to deal with is that the first season of the show, [they] were primarily space station-bound. With the comics, we had to find a middle ground and get them off the station more, or it would have gotten boring."

Altman offers some insights into what it takes to write *Trek*. "I felt from the beginning that the key to making the comics work was to be true to the show and not put in gratuitous action and phaser fights just because it was a comic book. I had to be true to the characters and the voices, and yet not have a bunch of talking heads in Sisko's ready room going on for seven pages. So you make some

concessions, but always with the idea that you've got to be true to the spirit of the show."

The change that comes over Michael Friedman when he drops *Trek* novels in favor of *Trek* comics is relatively basic.

"When you write a novel, it's all on your shoulders," offers the scribe whose *Trek* comic output includes a slew of *Next Generation* titles, the new *TNG* mini-series *Shadowheart*, a number of annuals, and the *Generations* film adaptation. "When it comes to the comics, you suddenly become part of a team. You've got to think more visually."

Friedman believes that *Star Trek* characters and their actions tend to be the same no matter what the medium, and cites more similarities than differences. "If there is a new perspective with the comics, it's that the dialogue is more naked and out there. It is very obvious in a comic when the dialogue works or does not work. With the *Next Generation* comics, I go in with the attitude of writing a novel in visual bites, and that seems to work."

Penciler Rob Davis, who will be first off the planet with the *Voyager* books, has worked every side of the *Trek* track. DC's *Star Trek* and *Next Generation*, Malibu's *DS9*—you name it, he's been there. His most recent adventure was the *DS9: Hearts and Minds* epic. But he is the first to concede that blasting off with *Trek* has given him a sense of history.

"I've been able to draw the first black captain and the first woman captain," he enthuses. "It's exciting to be in on breaking the mold."

Davis admits that helping to produce comic book history has caused him to, in a sense, go back to school. "I haven't really been concentrating on the female figure for a while, and so I'm really going to have to bear down and remember that women move differently and are anatomically different."

The artist claims, however, to have already been through the more personal *Star Trek* wars and overcome a number of challenges.

"It's been nice to draw *The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine* people, because they are younger and you don't have to cheat on their bodies," he chuckles. "You can't really lie and say Uhura doesn't have a bit of a weight problem. Sulu and McCoy are the only [characters] whose bodies have remained consistent all the way through. I've always drawn Spock like he looked in the second movie. At that point, he was still thin but not yet saggy. In *The Next Generation*, we don't draw Riker from the first or seventh season. He's drawn from the second season when he's still pretty thin and he's got a beard. You walk a fine line sometimes."

Davis concedes that *Star Trek* comics are tough to draw, and generally cause an artist to fall into the trap of using six panels and the same kinds of shots, due to the sheer amount of information. "I've tried to get away from that with the books I've done. I don't get away with a lot of splash pages, but I will sometimes put five panels on a page or change the size and angles. I'm also big on having the characters use real props, like Sisko playing with his baseball or having characters sit a certain way. I tend to restage things to avoid becoming static."

The *Next Generation* crew.

Davis's most wanted list of characters begins with *DS9*'s aliens, Odo and Quark, and *Next Generation*'s Geordi LaForge. "Geordi is simple because those glasses cut off a lot of the potential problem areas to draw. ["Classic" *Trek*'s] Scotty is also easy. He's just a heavy guy with a mustache. [*Deep Space Nine*'s] Dax is easy because she is so traditionally beautiful.

"The problems come with the characters who are not traditional in their appearance. [*Next Generation*'s] Dr. Crusher with her bony face and older look is unusually attractive. [*DS9*'s] Dr. Bashir is also tough because he's not traditionally handsome."

But what ultimately sets Davis's gorge to rising is what he considers the ultimate *Star Trek* comic book red flag. "It's that damned conference room," he laughs. "The *Next Generation* conference room has windows, so that solved a lot of problems. But the conference room in the old show was just a walled room!"

If there is a secret to drawing any incarnation of *Star Trek*, Gordon Purcell must have one of the few existing keys. The artist's *Trek* credentials are massive, encompassing DC's "Classic" *Star Trek* #53-#54 from the first series and #11-#44 from the second series. He's done *Next Generation's* first annual, issues #7-#8 and #71, the second *Next Generation* special, the *Generations* movie adaptation, and is currently riding a six-issue range on *Deep Space Nine*.

"The big thing is that the characters have to look a lot like the actors," Purcell notes. "It also has to work as a comic book, so it can't be too talky. When you don't have action sequences and you're dealing with people sitting around the conference room talking, then you do close-ups and try to draw real emotion on their faces."

Purcell, who is big on research, speculates that the easiest job for the *Voyager* crew will be the Vulcan. "All you have to do is put big ears and pointed eyebrows on a human face."

But he offers that doing *Trek* has not always been that easy. "Odo has been difficult to do because his skin is so smooth, but I guess I got lucky and managed to fall into just the right lines. Quark hasn't been too bad. He's so alien-looking that even when I've been slightly off on the character, he's still looked essentially like Quark. Kira was a problem in

the beginning, because I had not been drawing female figures in a while. I was getting fan letters saying I was drawing her like a man. But the upside to doing *Star Trek* is that it has allowed me to take a basically straightforward realistic style and stretch it a bit."

Since the fortunes of the comics and the television series are inevitably tied together, one has to speculate on what the impact of the recent *Star Trek: Generations* film and the demise of Captain Kirk will have on the books.

"At this point, what happens in the movie won't affect our storylines," says editor Paniccia. "The only impact is that the fans get excited when a new movie comes out and are more apt to run out and pick up a *Star Trek* comic."

For Margaret Clark, whose books meld even tighter with the fortunes of the films, *Generations* will cause a slight change in plans. "In the past, all of our books took place between the last television episode and the current movie. Now that the [*Next Generation*] series is over, we'll move the stories to a space in the timeline between the current movie and the next movie."

Clark also indicates that the current state of movie and TV affairs will make her creative life easier. "When I first took over *The Next Generation* books, I found my hands tied by having a good story idea that we couldn't use because the series might want to use it at some point. Now, with the release of *Generations*, and the fact that the series won't be around to use 25 story ideas a year, we don't have that much in the way of restrictions. The end of the series is more than a little bit liberating."

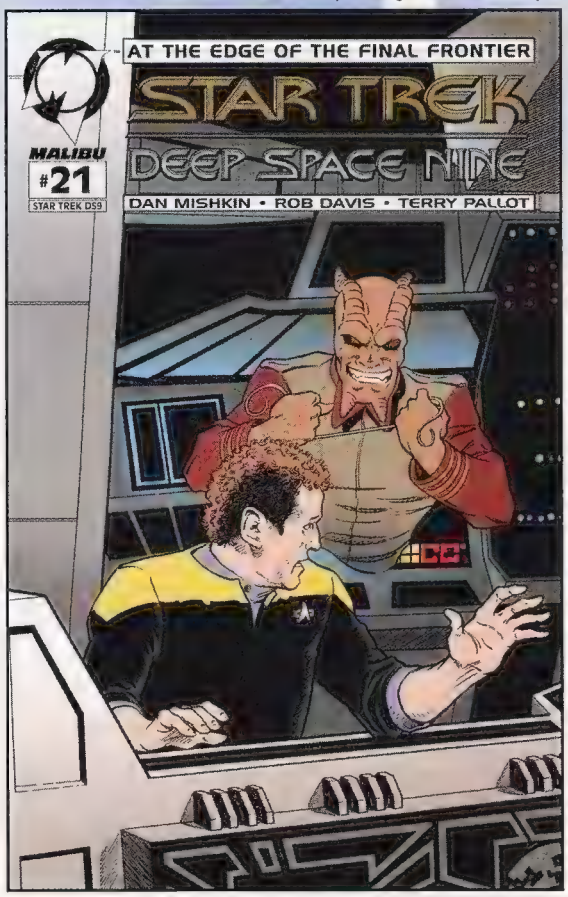
Paniccia is also optimistic that once *Voyager* gets off the launch pad, the creative possibilities will be endless. "With *Voyager*, we're not going to be running into the Romulans or other established aliens. This is all brand-new. We'll be creating races, empires, and societies from scratch. To some extent, *Voyager* might end up being the freest *Star Trek* series to date. I know it will be more open than *Deep Space Nine*."

The Malibu editor also points toward a significant step to the front with the announcement of an in-the-works title called the *Star Trek Celebrity Series*. "Basically, it will allow any characters that have appeared in *The Next Generation* or *Deep Space Nine* to appear in the book. In the past, Paramount would not allow us to use *Next Generation* characters unless they had appeared in *Deep Space Nine*, so things are definitely getting a little looser."

Friedman, the low-key optimist in this bunch, feels that more *Trek* can only make for better *Trek*.

"I believe we've established a rhythm with the *Star Trek* books," he says. "It's a rhythm that allows us to jump around, to do the big stories and the small, personal stories. Sure, we get pumped for the big issues. But we don't feel that we necessarily have to top ourselves with each issue, and that's because *Star Trek* fans tend to be more loyal and stable than a lot of comic book audiences. We can take chances with *Star Trek* and not have to worry about a downturn in sales of one issue doing us in."

And it is those fans that Clark can relate to, since she was already a *Star Trek* fan when she came on board. And ultimately, it is that fan mentality among the creative troops, claims Paniccia, that makes the *Star Trek* comic book universe go round.



Chief O'Brien appears to be having trouble with the natives.

"Almost everybody who works on the books is a fan of the show," he concludes. "And because they are fans, they all know the *Star Trek* Universe backwards and forwards."

Of course, whenever *Star Trek* is involved, the creators always want to put all their energies into moving forward. And this particular phenomenon's fans are always ecstatic to be along for the ride. ☆

Marc Shapiro, a freelance writer based in Pasadena, Calif., was born too loose.

STAR POWER

What the actors behind the *ST* characters think about their comic book depictions.

A number of actors from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* keep close ties to their comic book counterparts.

Whoopi Goldberg has asked for copies of the books and checks out all the artwork in which she appears. Ditto Patrick Stewart and Jonathan Frakes. Gates McFadden, Marina Sirtis, and Levar Burton get to look at any pages in which they appear by themselves.

***Star Trek* actors and *Star Trek* comics do mix, and, depending on whom you talk to, they all have an opinion. William Shatner, ever the cautious, politically correct guy, claims to have never seen the comics. "But I would say that if Paramount has given these people the license, they must be confident in their quality."**

George Takei feels the comics have treated Sulu real well.

"I'm absolutely delighted that they've made me a captain in the comics, and I hope they keep me there for at least another 10 years," he says in classic Sulu tones. "Giving orders from the center seat is much preferred to sitting at the helmsman's console."

Takei, however, has some criticism of the way his likeness is interpreted. "The artists seem to be working off of certain stock photos and, in terms of likeness, it seems to me that they should be working off of what's right for the situation and the action."

Armin Shimerman, who plays the alien hustler Quark on *Deep Space Nine*, believes *Star Trek* comics are legit.

"The comics are a great adjunct to the series. [They] do stories that can't be done on the series. The comics give people a different look at the characters from a different point of view. Anything that promotes Gene Roddenberry's vision and themes is a good thing."

Shimerman, who says he is "working with some writer friends to create some story ideas for *Deep Space Nine* comics at Malibu," is somewhat at odds with the way Quark comes across on the paneled page.

"I feel the comic book take on Quark is not necessarily the vision of the character that I have. But I have no problem with their take. It's just another person's interpretation. I'm enough of a classically trained actor to know that you can play Hamlet different ways and that it can still be Hamlet."

—Marc Shapiro

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WHAT'S... CHAY

HOWARD CHAYKIN is one of the best-known and well-respected comic writer-artists in the business. His past credits are diverse, including titles that range from Marvel Comics's *Star Wars* and *Micronauts* in the '70s to DC's *The Shadow* and *Blackhawk* mini-series in the '80s. But Chaykin's best-known works are those he created himself, notably Vortex Comics's *Black Kiss* in 1988, Malibu's recent *Power & Glory*, and the critically acclaimed *American Flagg!* for First Comics which began in 1983.

These days, Chaykin is more involved with writing television projects than anything else. He has written for *The Flash* (CBS) and *Viper* (NBC), and is currently working on a science fiction pilot for CBS called *The Tomorrow Breed*. Still, he has comics in the works, notably a new *Fury of S.H.I.E.L.D.* title starting this February for Marvel and his creator-owned *The Life and Times of Forever Maelstrom* to be published by Malibu through its Bravura imprint in 1995.

I first met Howard Chaykin when I was extremely inebriated and he was stone-cold sober at a Malibu Comics party during 1993's Philadelphia Comicfest convention. We immediately started arguing over who was a better graphic storyteller, with Howard championing Will Eisner and me championing Wally Wood. I lost.

Humility and masochism being two of my more endearing qualities, I volunteered to do this interview, which took place on October 31, 1994 at Chaykin's Southern California studio. All through the interview, his trusty hound, Easy, who is typically fed a steady diet of journalists, growled menacingly just beyond a thin screen door.

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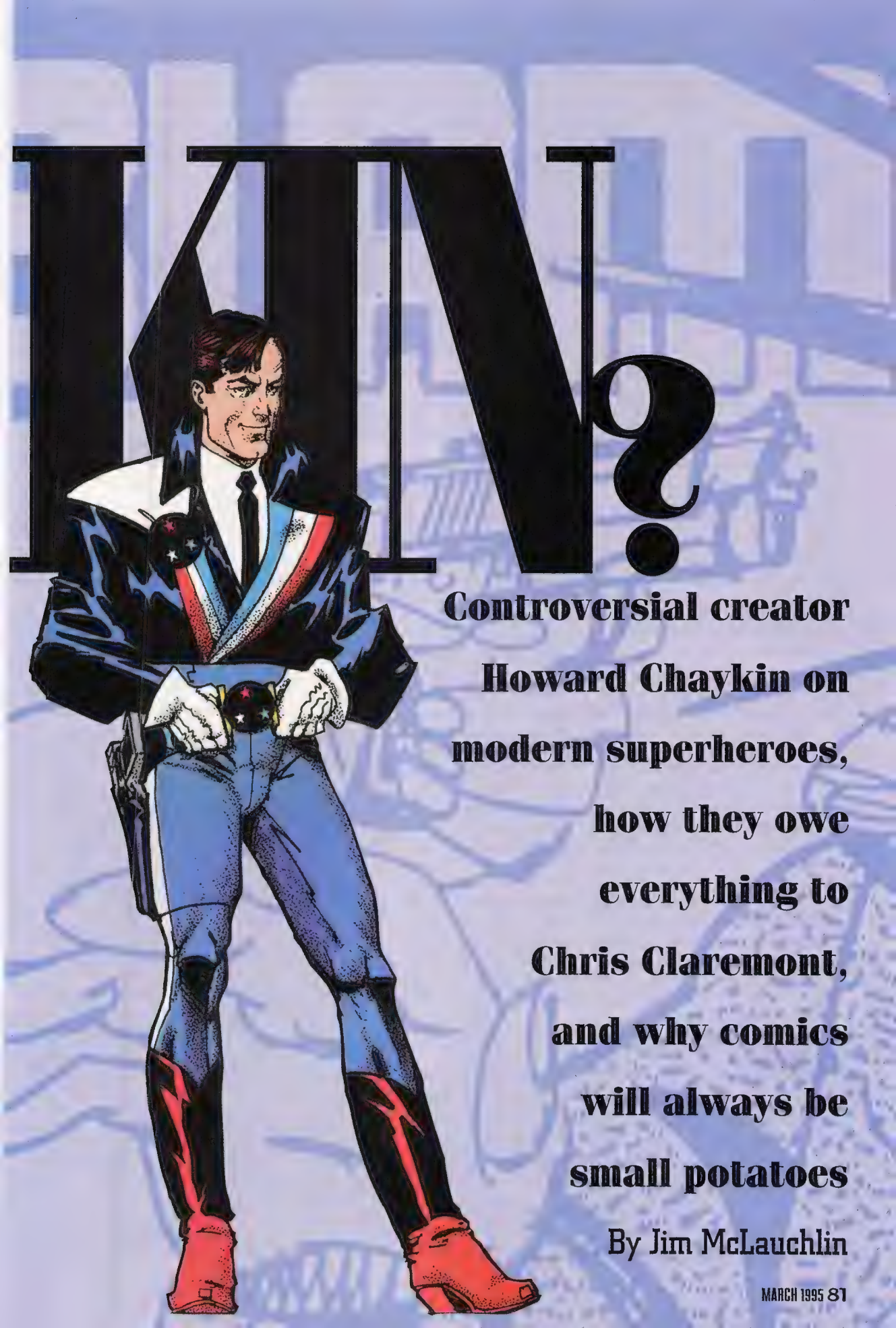

KIN?

Controversial creator Howard Chaykin on modern superheroes, how they owe everything to Chris Claremont, and why comics will always be small potatoes

By Jim McLauchlin

PHOTO: COURTESY MALIBU COMICS

WHO THE HECK IS THIS GUY?

WIZARD: What do you do for a living? Are you a comic writer who also does TV or a TV writer who also does comics? Are you a writer in general?

HOWARD CHAYKIN: I've always said that what I do for a living is traceable back to a childhood spent playing with toy soldiers and drawing airplanes bombing my homework. I like inventing stories. What drew me to comics in the first place was the idea of telling stories with pictures; the graphic quality of comics really appeals to me. Then I started writing my own stuff when I recognized that, for the most part, I was considerably more literate and aware of the world around me than many of the writers that I was working with. That sounds terribly arrogant, but we'll all live with that. I moved to California nine years ago to see about using the cash derived from *American Flagg!* to get into film. I've written a bunch of movies, none of which have been made, and found myself in television where I've done staff work and some episodes. I rather like it.

The nice thing about my life is that I work in television and comics. Because I'm comfortable with both careers, each allows me not to be corrupted by the other. I don't have to pander to the comic book audience to give them what they think they want, nor in turn do I have to do the same thing in film or television. I can make my living in either without dropping to my knees and pledging allegiance to either one.

Is this best for you? Or would you rather limit yourself to just one or the other?

I don't know. It's what I have now. I'm renowned for being a surly, acerbic, opinionated guy, but while I remain very opinionated, I'm certainly nowhere near acerbic or surly. I'm a lot more comfortable with myself now than I've ever been. This is the life that I live and I'm grateful for it.

So you're not an "artist" who is absorbed by your work. You live your life, and your work is part of that.

Don't get me wrong. I love my work. And I work a lot. My girlfriend says that I work far too much, but the fact is that I LOVE what I do for a living. I love to write, I love to draw. I didn't draw at all for four years. I started drawing again two years ago, and I discovered what had happened was that it didn't so much go away as it became something different.

When you said earlier that you're not pandering to an audience either in comics or in television, what are you doing? Are you writing for you?

No, that sounds like some sort of '60s crap. The fact is, I write commercially and I always will. But my idea and someone else's of what's commercial often differ radically. I tend to write stories that would entertain me—smart-ass dialogue, interesting characters, sexy situations, violence, danger, threats, all that stuff. And when I draw those stories, I try to draw them with characterization and characters who act in ways that are recognizable to me as an observer of the human condition. There are not many artists around today who draw characters who act. That's important to me. Many artists draw very intense and energetic characters, but there aren't a lot who can convey a range of human emotion without broad cartoony effects. I come from a generation of comic talent who were expected to draw any kind of story in any situation. I like heroic fiction and heroic fantasy; I do larger-than-life figures who still have recognizable human qualities.

IN THE BEGINNING...

So, to get into the traditional Miss America questions, how did you get started in comics?

I worked for Gil Kane as a gopher for $50 a week when I was 19. Although I did no drawing for Gil, I learned more about being a comic book artist in those couple of months than I ever learned anywhere else. I learned about rhythm and the discipline required—the work ethic portion of it.

Gil and I have a relationship to this day. I admire him greatly. He's one of my favorite artists. I'm very much the product of a '50s comic book education. Kane, Joe Kubert, Alex Toth, and Carmine Infantino. Those are my guys. And I love their characters. I told [writer] James Robinson that if it comes to be that there is a sequel to his *The Golden Age* [mini-series for DC]—a *Silver Age*—I want to draw it. Getting the opportunity to do all those 1950s characters, to do Green Lantern, do the Flash, and not to write 'em, just to draw 'em—that would be fun.

How about television? How did you get started writing for TV?

I was partners with John Moore [writer of

AMERICAN FLAGG!

American Flagg! tells the tales of Reuben Flagg, Plexus Ranger (i.e. cop), enforcing the laws on the mean streets (and even meaner shopping malls) of Chicago in the year 2031. Reuben's world is a bit scary and different, but still bears an uncanny resemblance to our own. In Chaykin's Chicago of the future, basketball is illegal, the phone company has officially taken over the U.S. government and relocated to Mars, *Bob Violence* is the top TV show going, and a cat can be elected mayor of Chicago. Someone's got to put it all back together, and Flagg just might be the man.

***TIME²*: An intersection of the infinite where eternity meets forever. Crime, sex, and the mean streets of an alternate reality.**

Marvel's *Doom 2099* and *X-Men 2099*] at a convention. We got a call from my agent about *The Flash* [TV show]. We got there and discovered we were on staff and that was it. John and I wrote five original stories, one teleplay from someone else's story, and a couple of complete rewrites from freelancer scripts. By volume alone, we really set the tone for the show. I'm real proud of the work I did on that show. The Nightshade shows were fun. I think the Trickster shows were terrific. I had a good relationship with Danny Bilson and Paul Dimeo, the producers, so when *Viper* started, I was hired on that.

THE POWERS THAT NOT BE

You mentioned John Moore.

What's the relationship between you two?

John was my assistant on *The Shadow* [mini-series for DC in 1986]. I hired John as my assistant and we developed a working relationship that ultimately evolved into a partnership. And now John is, of course, taking the world by storm with *X-Men 2099*, and more power to him.

What do you think of his comic stuff? Do you enjoy it?

I've read it. I'm absolutely stunned that he can write like that.

How so?

It is a language that I don't understand and have no interest in whatsoever. But I'm very impressed with his ability to do it. It is not something I feel capable of doing.

So, what you're saying is you don't see yourself ever writing straight superhero fare?

Right. You better believe it. Most superhero comics today are *The Big Chill* with superpowers—people who are better-looking than you, having problems you wish you had, and they can beat the crap out of you from across the room. It doesn't interest me. When I read stories about guys who can make ice cream by thinking about it and pound you senseless without getting up out of their seats...

. .you'd think they're not gonna worry about girl problems or doing laundry.

That's part of it. What superpowers have become is the equivalent of alienation, angst, and pimples. They allow adolescents having problems acclimating to society to see that people who are capable of making ice cream just by thinking about it have the same problems they do, only with superpowers. Superhero comics tell us that with great power comes great responsibility and great problems.

I have difficulty writing protagonists who are of a higher moral quality than I am. I like to think my characters act like real people, and are just as moral or immoral as I am. I do stories about heroes, but my heroes aren't completely black-and-white. Black-and-white heroes are sociopaths. They're crazy. They have no human scale.

I don't have the time for that, and I don't produce characters who behave that way, because it's dishonest. If you had superpowers, would you fight crime? I would do what anybody does with special skills. I would exploit them to the best of my ability so I wouldn't have to work.

You'd become the American Powerhouse.

Probably. But that offends the comic book audience because they expect higher morality from their heroes.

I think it's a generally held axiom that the take of superheroes with the foibles of the common man and on the higher moral plane was something Marvel pioneered in the '60s, which has since helped bring comics into the kind of presence they have today and gave them credibility. Has that now gone too far?

I was around when those comics were being taken seriously in the '60s and one of the things that we've forgotten is that they weren't taken seriously as literature. They were just hip. Everybody knew they were kidding. But after Stan Lee came, all these guys who'd grown up on the stuff and really loved it, took it seriously. Now the guys producing comic books really think it's art.

So basically comics just take themselves too seriously?

I like to be entertained as much as the next guy. I thought *Watchmen* [DC's 1985 mini-series] was a great comic book. One of the great things about it was that it was a really smart comic book done by someone other than me. And there just aren't a lot of those on the mainstream comic menu. I'm not talking about Harvey Pekar or Chester Brown or Peter Bagge. Those guys produce material for a different audience. Compared to them, I am hopelessly mired in mainstream superhero comics, just by a different name and with a different tone. By those standards, *American Flagg!* and *Time²* and everything else I do is basically commercial trash. I guess what it comes down to is that I like commercial trash. I just wish there was more interesting commercial trash available for me as an audience.

So, are comics a lowbrow form of entertainment?

Yes.

Can something like, say, a *Watchmen* transcend that?

No.

No matter how good a comic is, it's still just a comic book?

Yeah. I love comics, but we're a very tiny blip in a big culture. I live with this wonderful woman upstairs who's never read a comic book in her life and she's perfectly happy. She

doesn't know what she's missing and doesn't care. My stuff is hieroglyphics to her. She doesn't get it. She doesn't understand the language. She says, "Show me how to read it." She's not being ironic or facetious. We have to understand how small we are. All those millions in sales we hear about are actually greedy little putzes buying unopened boxes of comic books. We have to accept the fact that our audience is not going to expand.

Still, you take a hell of a lot of pride in your comics, despite the fact that we're dealing with a lowbrow form of entertainment. Don't you see any sort of a contradiction there?

Not at all. I just don't have any pretensions about my material.

OWING EVERYTHING TO CLAREMONT

***American Flagg!* has been called the seminal comic of the 1980s.**

Was it? I believe that *Flagg!* demonstrated what could be done with comics, but then nobody bothered. As far as "seminal," I think the single most important talent in comics in the past 15 years is [writer] Chris Claremont. Comics, as they are today, owe everything they've got to Chris Claremont.

Why is that?

He invented the contemporary language of comics, the current relationship of hero to hero. His characterization of the X-Men is the single most influential language in comics today. Comics are what they are today because of what Chris did with the X-Men.

Interesting theory.

Not a theory, a fact. The X-books are the tail that wags the dog at Marvel and they are spoken and written and acted out in the language of Chris Claremont. The offshoots of Marvel Comics are all offshoots of Chris Claremont comics. Those character relationships appearing anywhere in comics derive directly from what Chris did.

I think *Flagg!* was smart, clever, and demonstrated a lot of stuff that could have been done with comics, but they didn't get there. *Flagg!* was convoluted, it was witty, it was overloaded, it was chockfull. Ken Bruzenak [*Flagg!* letterer] helped keep it chockfull with crazy word balloons and sound effects. We're gonna do *Flagg!* again sooner or later.

A perfect segue into my next question. Now that the end of your recent *Power & Glory* has set up the Plex, the futuristic government of *Flagg!*, what kind of. .

I'm not yet ready to tie the two books together. I'm waiting for enough time to do it.

Are we going to see young Reuben Flagg?

I don't think so. I have a [future] *Flagg!* outline somewhere on this table. I know what I'm gonna do.

Any idea when it might see publication?

Nope. There are offers on the book. I'm as curious as anyone else to see the new *Flagg!* because I'm real curious to see what's happened to me in the time since I did the book. The book was done at a time before the AIDS crisis, and you had a hero who was going out and sleeping with every woman in the book.

But he did have Mañañacillian, the morning-after contraceptive that kills all VD on contact.

I'll have to consider the responsibility factor. I wouldn't do a book now that made positive that kind of lifestyle. Another thing is [that] when I did *Flagg!*, I drank, I smoked a lot, I did all the things that one does at that stage of life, which I don't do anymore. It will be interesting to see what changes are made.

Some of the elements in this future-oriented book have almost come about today. You've got Mañañacillian in *Flagg!* and today there is RU-486, the controversial "abortion pill." You had Plexmalls where everybody lived, and today we've got giant shopping centers with apartments attached. How do you do it? You got a crystal ball, or are we reading too much into this?

No. I read newspapers.

Much unlike other people in the field?

Yes. This brings us full circle to the questions we were talking about earlier—about superheroes and real problems and everything else. One thing I have is an avid interest in the world outside of comics. When you came into my office, you did a troll around my bookshelves. You'll notice that interspersed with the occasional comic-related product, there's lots of stuff that has nothing to do with comics.

I subscribe to at least 20 different magazines, a wide range of political thought, all of which gets clipped and filed every week. I pay attention. There's not a thing in *American Flagg!* that wasn't in *Time* in 1982. There's not a thing that will be in your life in 2005 that isn't in newspapers today.

NAUGHTY SUCCESS

Moving along more or less chronologically, we come to the *Black Kiss* mini-series. What the hell was *Black Kiss*?

An absolute epic in filth. *Black Kiss* came along at the time that there was an attempt to

BLACK KISS

Sex, vampires, hermaphrodites, mobsters, sex—you name it, *Black Kiss* has it. Sexually charged with mystique and sharp dialogue, this 12-issue "epic in filth" revolves around two blonde bombshells: '50s B-movie queen Beverly Grove (who doesn't look a day over thirty) and her practically identical friend Dagmar Laine. Both have major skeletons in their closets (which you learn as the series progresses), and become embroiled in a search for a mysterious porn film which Bev starred in, and is subsequently being used as blackmail against her by a satanic cult. Enter Cass Pollack, who is wanted for two murders he didn't commit, and Bev is his only alibi. However, the alibi comes with a price: Cass must find the film for her to give the alibi to the police. Of course, it doesn't help Cass that the underworld wants him dead in the meantime.

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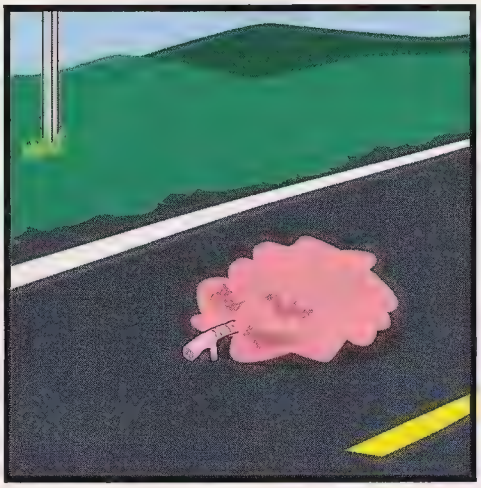

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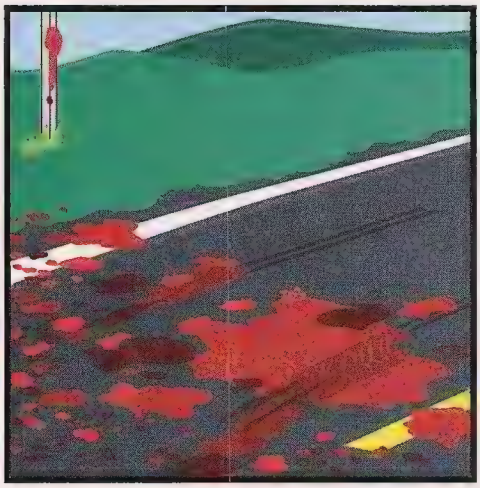

WIZARD says no to drugs.

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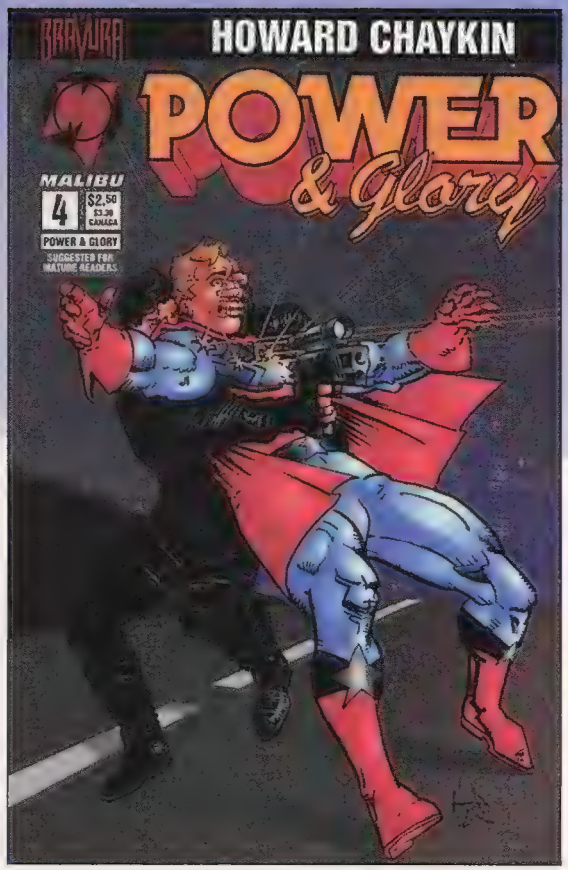
POWER & GLORY

Power & Glory is the story of the American Powerhouse Project, a U.S. government effort to create a superhero, largely for public relations purposes. The only problem? They've chosen the wrong man to be A-Pex, their *übermensch*. Allan Powell is a self-serving, egotistical, mental midget who has a phobia about being touched. When he undergoes the massive surgery and intense training required to become A-Pex, his phobia turns into full-blown psychosis. We've got our superman, but he can't stand the notion of physical contact with anyone. That leaves National Intelligence Agent Michael Gorski to do all of A-Pex's behind-the-scenes dirty work while Powell grabs all the glory.



impose a rating system on comics by the major comic companies. *Black Kiss* was done to offend every sensibility I could come up with.

Did you succeed?

Yeah, and I sold a load of books, too. I was really happy with it. I had a great time doing *Black Kiss*. I couldn't do it again. It's not the way I think anymore. The trade paperback edition just came out and I've been seeing it more often and signing more copies than ever. Just one example of misunderstanding things—I was on CompuServe [a computer online service] and some hockey puck was coming at me about how he thought *Power & Glory* was just the superhero [version of] *Black Kiss*. Like *Black Kiss* with capes. I was amazed. What, because characters in *Power & Glory* were having sex, then it must be like *Black Kiss*?

Now I see why the censors and ratings scare you. Do you ever look at your work after it's done and say, "Yeah, this succeeded" or "Nah, this didn't"?

Constantly.

With *Black Kiss*, you say you went out to offend everybody and you did.

Yes.

It's successful, then.

Yep.

In those terms.

I also look at the drawings. I really love the characters of Ricky Fabricant, and Nunzio, the cop. Those are great characters. They're really interesting guys. The conversations they're having are fun. What did you think?

The truth? I read two issues and I said, "What is this?"

Read the book!

I might eventually get to it, but I was coming off of *Flagg!* and the two *Time²* graphic novels, which I thought were outstanding. I was really looking forward to *Black Kiss*. I read through the first issue. .

Didn't you get into it?

It was a buck and a quarter when most comics were under a buck and I distinctly remember reading it and saying, "This is only 10 pages, all more-or-less porn for a buck and a quarter!"

Not more-or-less porn, definitely porn.

I asked myself why I was wasting money.

I had a fairly high page rate 'cause I assumed the book wouldn't sell. I was astounded that it sold as well as it did. It moved phenomenally. I've sold the rights to the film a number of times.

What's the chance of a *Black Kiss* movie actually making it to the screen?

There are possibilities. One of the great things about having my life is that I can make those kind of choices. I have a healthy attitude about my work. I recognize its value, but I also recognize its insignificance so that it doesn't get in the way of having a good time.

SPEAKING CONVERSATIONALLY

***Power & Glory* is going to be the bridge to *American Flagg!* What can we expect to see in future installments of *Power & Glory*?**

Power & Glory was an opportunity to return to the theme I'd done in *Flagg!* In the future I'll be doing four issues a year featuring the characters, putting them into situations that strike my fancy and piss off the average guy who wants his heroes to be noble and his villains to be dastardly.

Then the characters in *Power & Glory* will continue to act like real people?

Yeah. It's just more interesting to me. I mean, I try not to expect more of fictional characters than I would expect of myself. I don't read science fiction anymore because I find the real world much more fantastic.

As the real world becomes more fascinating than science fiction, does that make it harder or easier for you to write stories?

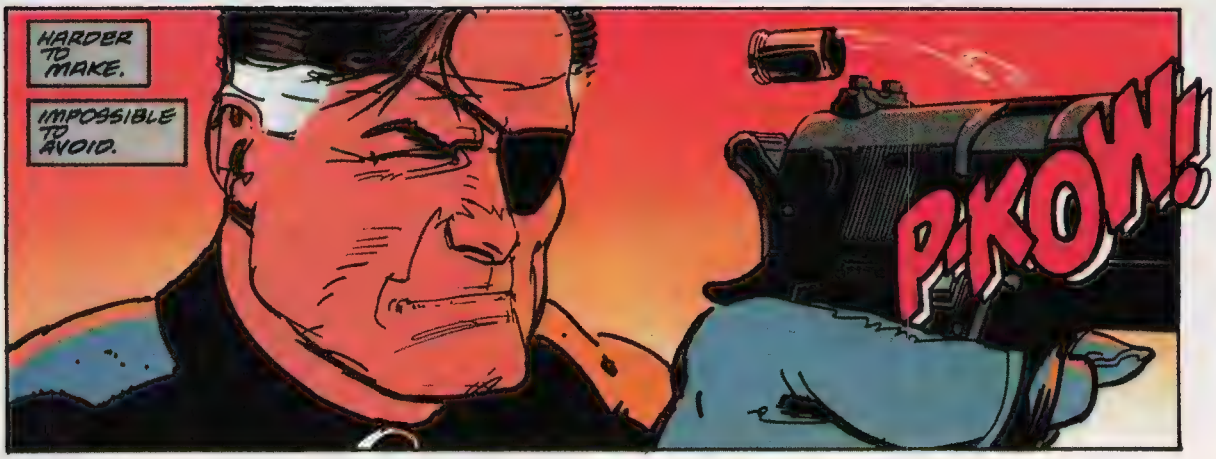
Much easier in the long run. That file over there is all clips from magazines. The way the world is going is so much nuttier than anybody could have imagined. One of the reasons I confuse comic book audiences is that I don't believe in the vocabulary of comics. Comic books have the same dialogue as soap operas. Characters always refer to each other by their first and last names. Dialogue in comics is profoundly expository. Everybody tells each other the story. This is particularly true lately, where most guys who draw comics can't tell stories. They don't understand there is a logic to which pictures come before or after others. They think comic books are just a series of different scenes inside squares—or rectangles, triangles, trapezoids, what have you—on the page. But they're a lot more than that. So the dialogue in *Power & Glory* is not expository. My characters speak conversationally and the story gets told alongside that. I'm proud of that. It occasionally confuses an audience, because a lot of my dialogue in comics is actually better read out loud.

You'd look damned funny doing that.

Hey, I'm not worried what you're doing in the privacy of your own home. And sooner or later, *Power & Glory* ties into *American Flagg!* I'm not sure how or where or why, but I do want to do *Flagg!* again.

THE SOUND & THE FURY

Meanwhile, I'm doing a new book featuring Nick Fury, a character at Marvel that I absolutely adore. The book is called *Fury of S.H.I.E.L.D.* It's drawn by Courtney "Corky"



Lehmkuhl, the guy who did [Image Comics's] *Supreme* for a while. Corky's a guy I've known since I moved out to California. He's a very talented young artist. I've plotted out and broken down the first three issues. I'm committed to six issues. The recent *Wolverine/Fury: Scorpio Rising* book makes a nice segue to the material. I'm also doing a Nick Fury/Captain America graphic novel with [writer] Ben Schwartz. Ben wrote the *Viper* comic book. I've been working with him on a few things. I'll show you that stuff if you're into it. [Shows the roughed-out pages]

That's interesting. Looks like we've got a conference call here between S.H.I.E.L.D. and AIM, who're bitter enemies.

Again, I want these characters to be realistic. These people, or actually people like these, who work for something like the CIA, are bureaucrats. They're not ideological. They're bureaucrats and they've got a job to do. There's none of that "Die, red dog!" stuff. They're much more practical than anything.

REAGAN STARTED IT ALL

Who's this guy with the big dog? Is the dog Easy?

Easy modeled for the wolf. The next big project that I own and control is *The Life and Times of Forever Maelstrom*. Maelstrom is the Paul Bunyan of time. He's an American folk hero who travels through time with the aid of a many-thousand-year-old genie which takes the form of a large timber wolf. Maelstrom went to school with the genie and they were both undergraduates at Yale in 1980. Maelstrom was a democrat. The genie didn't vote because he wasn't an American citizen, but he was willing to take a bet. He was convinced that Carter would win. Maelstrom, although he voted for Carter, knew that Reagan was gonna kick his ass, so he voted Carter but bet Reagan. By terms of the bet, the genie was enslaved to him.

Now how does this thousands-year-old genie make such a sucker bet?

He was bored and he'd never met anybody quite like Forever. Forever becomes a multi-millionaire collecting archeological specimens and animals for world zoos and museums. Then he thwarts an alien invasion and saves our entire civilization.

All in a day's work.

I like to think of it as my opportunity to do a Saturday matinee serial.

Seeing as how that's being published by Malibu, under its Bravura umbrella, what's your relationship with Bravura?

I'm a founder, along with Jim Starlin, Walt Simonson, Kane, Steven Grant, Dan Brereton, and Dan Jurgens.

Top: Chaykin will take aim on Nick Fury again. Left: Forever Maelstrom.

How, if at all, will Marvel's recent buyout of Malibu affect Bravura?

I have no idea. We'll have to wait and see.

Are you going to publish everything under Bravura?

No. I'm hoping to do a Vertigo book called *Michael and the Doctor*. It's kinda nutty. It's about a relationship between a little boy and a homicidal maniac. And I'm doing a Batman book for DC.

Can you give us any details on any of these?

The Batman story is an Elseworlds tale that takes place in the 1930s and that's all you're getting out of me. They're both really far down the line, anyway.

Once upon a time, you suggested that DC put you in charge of editing a line of noir paperback comics. They're now doing something a hell of a lot like that with Paradox Press. Are you gonna be doing anything there?

We're talking about something big. It's a 300-page crime book, which the Paradox Press format is just perfect for. It's action that takes place in the space of twelve hours. It's a period piece that's real nutty, and it's something I would really like to do.

The Paradox Press format is a bit off the beaten track for American comics. Can something like this catch on in the future? What do you think the state of comics will be in the future?

Paradox Press is not a wave of the future. And comics 10 years from now will probably look a lot like comics today—there'll be a lot of weenie crap out there. Sure, there have always been some interesting things that have popped up on the side, and there always will be, thank God. But those things will be largely beaten down by the volume of weenie crap. The state of comics will remain exactly the same. ☆

Jim McLauchlin, News Editor of Wizard*'s sister mag,* Collector's Sportslook, *received two cases of Pig's Eye Pilsner for Christmas and is a better man for it, too.*

6 REASONS WHY THESE TRADING CARDS ARE THE FINEST IN THE UNIVERSE!

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TOYING around • around • around • aroun

WITH SEAN AUNE

MICRO MACHINES MANIA!

With the annual Toy Fair just around the corner, toy companies are remaining as secretive as ever. They're trying to keep their new projects a mystery so that they can debut them at the upcoming trade show this February. I have managed to dig up some news bits, though.

The current prediction is that we will be seeing the introduction of toys based on *Batman Forever*, the third film in the Batman franchise, at the fair. This is a pretty safe bet, considering that products for *Batman* and *Batman Returns* were first seen at the toy fairs preceding the release of both of those films.

Those mighty Micro Machine folks just continue to produce more and more spectacular miniatures. Galoob has recently come out with some new Micro Machines based on the various generations of the *Star Trek* series. The current line-ups of each set are as follows:

Set #1 (original TV series)—S.S. Botany Bay (new), Klingon Battle Cruiser, and Romulan Bird of Prey

Set #2 (original TV series)—Galileo II, Space Station K-7 (new), and U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701

Set #3 (movie series)— Federation Space Dock (new), Klingon Bird of Prey, and U.S.S. Reliant

Set #4 (movie series)—Vulcan Shuttle Surak (new), U.S.S. Grissom (new), and U.S.S. Excelsior

Set #5 (*Next Generation* series)—Klingon Vor'Cha Attack Cruiser, U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D, and Romulan Scout Ship (new)

Set #6 (*Next Generation* series)—Borg ship, Ferengi Marauder, and U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-C (new)

Set #7 (*Next Generation* series)—Romulan Warbird, Shuttlecraft, and U.S.S. Stargazer (new)

Set #8 (*Deep Space Nine*)—Space Station Deep Space Nine, Cardassian Galor Warship, and Runabout (new)

Set #9 (*Star Trek: Generations*)—U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D (with removable saucer), Klingon Bird of Prey, and U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-B (all three are new releases)

As you can see, each set contains at least one new ship, and some even have two new ones. Unfortunately, this means that you will have to buy some sets with ships that you already own, in order to get just one new ship, but since these toys are done so well, it's actually worth it. And you can produce some really neat battle scenarios with all those Enterprises. Why, you could even reenact that scene from the *ST:TNG* episode, "Parallels," where countless Enterprises from different realities ended up in the same location. Go crazy! Anyway, some of these sets have already been released, so keep an eye out for them!

Over in the *Star Wars* Micro Machines, you can expect a whole galaxy of new releases. Set numbers are uncon-

Star Trek space vehicles—micro-sized! From left: Enterprise NCC-1701-D, Klingon Cruiser, and Romulan Warbird.

More micro-sized stuff! From left: Runabout, Cardassian Galor Warship, and Space Station Deep Space Nine.

ALL STAR TREK SPACE VEHICLES™ & © PARAMOUNT PICTURES. BACKGROUND ART ™ & © ECLIPSE.

firmed at press time, but the sets are as follows:

Set #1—Speeder Bike, Mon Calamari Cruiser (new), and Jabba's Sail Barge.

Set #2—Landspeeder (new), Millennium Falcon, and Jawa Sand Crawler.

Set #3—Speeder Bike with Imperial Scout (new), TIE Fighter, and Imperial Shuttle.

Set #4—TIE Bomber, Scout Walker, and Rebel Transport (new).

Set #5—A-Wing, Darth Vader's Star Destroyer Executioner (new), and B-Wing.

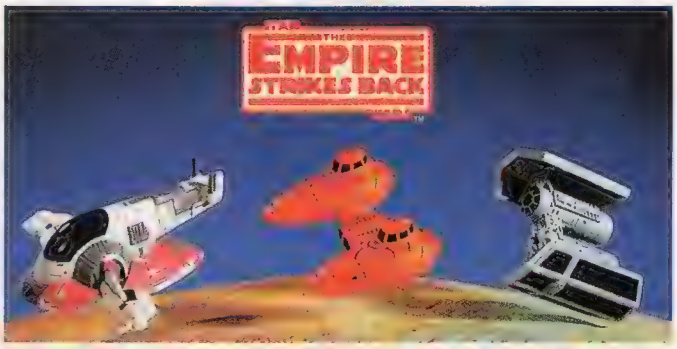
Set #6—Snow Speeder, Probot (new), and AT-AT.

Set #7—Star Destroyer, TIE Interceptor (new), and Rebel Blockade Runner.

Set #8—Y-Wing, X-Wing, and Darth Vader's TIE Fighter (new).

Set #9—Slave-I, Rebel Frigate (new), and Twin Pod Cloud Car.

The Star Wars set includes: (l. to r.) Blockade Runner, Jawa Sand Crawler, and Y-Wing Fighter.



L. to r. Slave-I, Twin Pod Cloud Car, and TIE Bomber.

As with the *Star Trek* collections, there are several duplicates from older sets, but quite a few cool new releases. So, once again you'll end up buying a lot of duplicates just to get some new ships. What to do with all those extra X-Wings and TIE-Fighters? Well, you can try setting up an all-out assault on the Death Star. "Stay on target. Stay on target. Alllmost theeere. Alllmost there..."

In addition to all those (excuse the pun) forceful ships, a number of new playsets will also be released. These include:

Jabba's Palace with Sarlaac Pit—Mini-Sand Skiff, Jabba, Boba Fett, Sy Snootles, Max Rebo, and Guard Creature.

Dagobah—X-Wing, Yoda, Luke Skywalker, R2-D2, Darth Vader, and Ben Kenobi.

Stormtrooper/Death Star Playset—Darth Vader's TIE Fighter, Imperial Commander, Luke in Stormtrooper gear, Han in Stormtrooper gear, Chewbacca, Princess Leia, and dead Stormtrooper.

Chewbacca/Endor Playset—Scout Walker, C-3PO, Chewbacca, Ewok with glider, AT-ST Pilot, and Speeder Bike with Imperial Scout.

In a new Micro Machine series, expect to see the already released *Power Rangers* sets in addition to some new ones. The ones that have already been released are:

Red Ranger set—Tyrannosaurus Rex Zord, Tommy, Red Ranger, and Red Battle Bike.

Black Ranger set—Mammoth Zord, Zack, Black Ranger, and Black Battle Bike.

Blue Ranger set—Triceratops Zord, Billy, Blue Ranger, Blue Battle Bike.

Yellow Ranger set—Saber-toothed Tiger Zord, Trini, Yellow Ranger, and Black Battle Bike.

Pink Ranger set—Pterodactyl Zord, Kimberly, Pink Ranger, and Blue Battle Bike.

In sets to be looking for:

Titanus vs. King Sphinx—Titanus, King Sphinx, Red Ranger, and Putty.

Dragonzord vs. Goldar—Dragonzord, Goldar, Blue Ranger, and Putty.

Megazord vs. Squatt—Megazord, Squatt, Black Ranger, and Putty.

No release date has been announced on these as of yet, but you'll be the first to know once I actually find out for myself.

Galoob will also be releasing sets based on the TV series *Babylon 5*, but at this time we do not know which star ships will be included.

Mortal Kombat figures are due in early 1995 from Hasbro. The current line-up consists of Johnny Cage, Liu Kang, Rayden, Shang Tsung, Sonya Blade, Scorpion, Smoke, and Sub-Zero. Proposed vehicles are Dragon MK-I with Reptile figure and Kombat Cycle with Kano. There may also be some 12-inch figures, but this has not been confirmed yet.

Well, it seems that some rumors can finally be confirmed about upcoming *Star Wars* film projects. Current plans are for the original film to be released on May 25, 1997, the 20th anniversary of the film, with new special effects and an additional four minutes of footage. At this time there is also going to be a re-release of older merchandise, but no one is quite sure as to what that entails.

The new films should begin hitting the screens in 1998, and of course there will be tons of new merchandise. As to *who* will be doing the new merchandise...well, that's still secretive at this time. As for rumors, well, we get tons of letters here at Toying Around concering rumors that everyone has been reporting on the Internet about upcoming releases. While I cruise around the net, I see a lot of stuff that is just out-and-out false. Every story in here is double-checked before it is even written. If no verification is available, we clearly state it to be a rumor. Do not believe everything you read over a computer bulletin board system. They can be great sources of information, but they also can be very misleading.

That's it for now. Come back next month and I'll see if I can actually weasel some more information out of those tight-lipped toy companies. Until then...see you in aisle 9.

Sean Aune is a freelance writer and owner of Splash Page Comics and Toys, a store in Kirksville, Mo.

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THE DARK

THE DARK © & ™ 1994 Joseph Naftali

ISSUE ONE
Coming
January 1995

••••••

40 pgs of Full Color

••••••

Joseph Naftali
Todd Lidstone
Kurt Hoff

FOODANG

FOODANG © & ™ 1994 Michael Duggan

ISSUE ONE
Coming
January 1995

••••••

38 pgs of Full Color

••••••

Michael Duggan
Mike Sagara

SON OF HOMEMADE HEROES

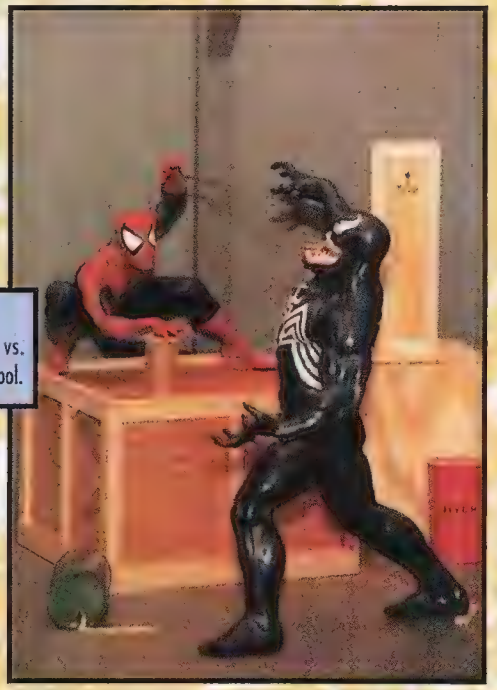
Welcome to a special installment of Homemade Heroes. What we do to keep things interesting around here every once in a while, is to bump the standard "I made a Starro figure out of a Toy Biz Spider-Man" schtick and, instead, showcase a handful of cool toys mixed with a smattering of props, and bingo, we've got ourselves Son of Homemade Heroes.

And hey, in addition to all prizes listed, everyone who has a figure see print here wins a copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #389 signed by Mark Bagley, a *Captain America* #425 signed by Mark Gruenwald and Dave Hoover, an *Agent Three-Zero* #1 signed by Stephen Platt, a *Superman/Doomsday* #2 signed by Dan Jurgens, a *Supreme* #18 signed by Marat Mychaels and Cedric Nocon, and a happenin' Cybernary baseball cap!

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

UNDER THE SEA

John Schwirian of Lexington Park, Md., brings us this underwater free-for-all (with the first Black Manta figure we've ever seen. Awesome!).



SPIDER-MAN VS. VENOM

Eddie Wong of Apalachin, N.Y., sends us this stylin' Spidey vs. Nutboy, showcasing the always awesome Horizon models. Pretty cool.

GODZILLA 1994

Carolyn Kellum of Haddonfield, N.J., brings us Godzilla cleaning up the Marvel Universe. Boy, he'd make a neat Avenger.

AQUAMAN AND COMPANY ™ & © DC COMICS. SPIDER-MAN, VENOM, DOCTOR OCTOPUS, AND MAGNETO ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. GODZILLA ™ & © TOHO CO. LTD.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

David Wiesenmayer of Chicago, Ill., showcases the Playmates *ST:TNG* figures and bridge playset. (If Captain Kirk wasn't dead, he woulda drop-kicked 'em all outta an airlock!)

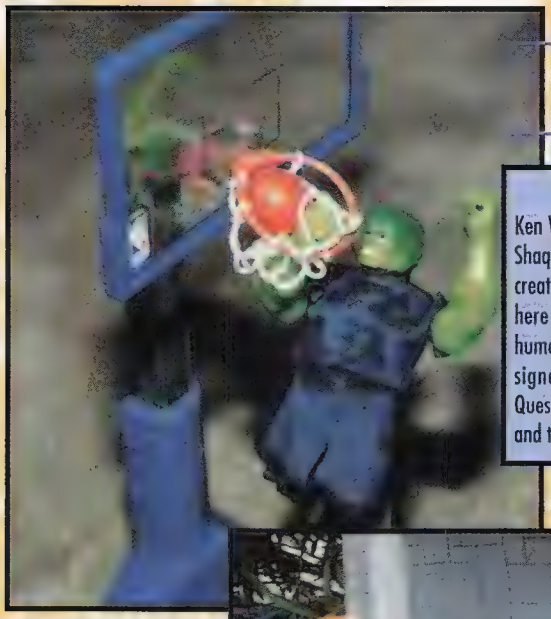
MMMM...

Shawn Parker of Menasha, Wis., shows us the episode of *seaQuest* we'd all like to see, as the sub's skipper, actor Roy Scheider, is reunited with an old friend.

REVENGE OF THE SINISTER SIX

Ron Lemay of Stedman, N.C., went to town on this one. Roll call—Doc Ock: Toy Biz Lex Luthor; Hobgoblin: a mix of Toy Biz's Green Goblin and Dr. Doom figures; Electro: Toy Biz Cyclops figure; Mysterio: Kenner Dark Knight Batman figure; Vulture: Kenner RoboCop and Toy Biz Mr. Sinister figures; Hulk: Toy Biz Strong Guy and Galoob Biker Mice from Mars Greasepit figures; and the "glassy" Sandman: Tyco Crash Test Dummy and Colossus figures. Whew!

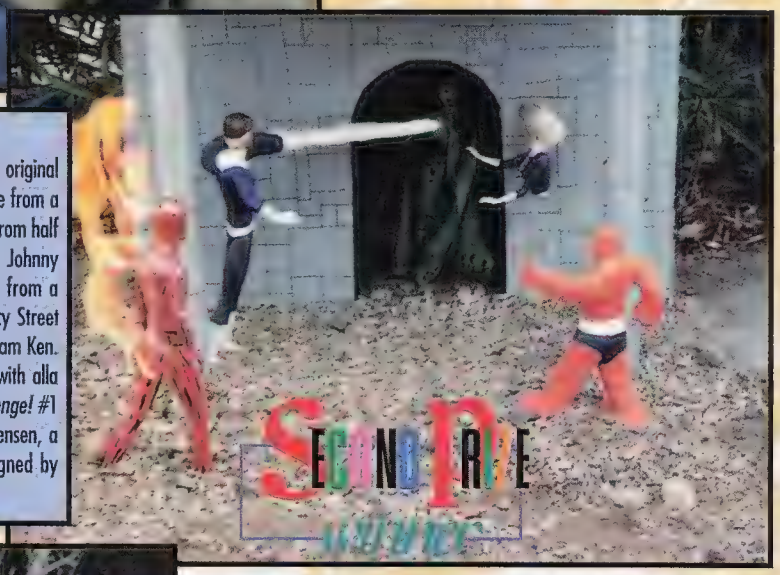
All *Star Trek* characters ™ & © Paramount Pictures. All Sinister Six Characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.



THIRD PRIZE winner

IN YOUR FACE

Ken Williams of Stevenson, Ala., used a Toy Biz Hulk, a Kenner Shaq Attaq rim hanger hoop, and some homemade clothes to create this jammin' scene (which made us crack up pretty good here at *Wizard*). For his efforts (and especially his sense of humor), Ken wins everything listed so far and a *Marvels* #4 signed by Alex Ross, *The Ray* (series) #1 signed by Joe Quesada, a *Spirits of Vengeance* #1 signed by Adam Kubert, and the *Iron Man 2020* trade paperback signed by Bob Wiacek!



SECOND PRIZE winner

F.F. VS. DOC DOOM

Matt and Amanda Hilshorst of Globe, Ariz., give us the original FF vs. the king of bad guys, Dr. Doom. Reed was made from a Mattel Dance Club Ken and homemade Play-Doh, Sue from half a Mattel Beach Blast Barbie (Neat "invisible" effect!), Johnny from a Mattel Beach Blast Ken (and a match), Ben from a Mattel Perfume Pretty Barbie (hope nobody on Yancy Street hears about that), and Vic from a Mattel California Dream Ken. For this awesome scene, Matt and Amanda walk off with alla that stuff listed so far and a copy of *Evil Ernie: Revenge!* #1 signed by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes, and Jason Jensen, a *Hulk* #420 signed by Peter David, a *Prophet* #5 signed by Stephen Platt, and a *Kindred* #1 signed by Brett Booth!

GRAND PRIZE winner

WOLVERINE VS. SABRETOOTH

Brad Nelson of New Brighton, Minn., created this scene using the Toy Biz Wolverine and Sabretooth figures (though we're not 100 percent sure if he used the big ones or li'l ones), and, as he says, "...lots of glue and patience." Nice job, Brad, especially in getting everything in scale. For his winning efforts, Brad gets all the cool prizes listed so far, plus *Zero Hour* #4-#0 signed by Dan Jurgens, and a *Gen13* #1 signed by Brandon Choi! ☆

If you're interested in submitting your own entry featuring an imaginative figure landscape scene with action figures (whether the figures are homemade or not), in the hopes of winning some cool stuff, send several well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, dammit!) of your scene to:

Son of Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Or, if you wanna take the easy way out and just submit your custom figures remade from some old figures, send several well-lit, clear, color photographs (Again, no Polaroids!) to:

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

HULK, FANTASTIC FOUR, WOLVERINE, AND SABRETOOTH ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

WIZARD CONTEST

WIN WITH WARCHILD!

To help kick off the debut of Rob Liefeld's new Maximum Press comic book company, yer buds at Maximum Press and *Wizard* have teamed up to bring you two full loads of wild stuff. Like...

Warchild and the Maximum Press Logo ™ & © Rob Liefeld Inc.

Grand Prize (One winner)

An original piece of artwork from *Warchild* #1 signed by Chap Yaep, a copy of *Warchild* #1 also signed by Chap Yaep, and a Warchild poster signed by the whole Warchild gang!

Second Prize (25 winners)

A copy of *Warchild* #1 signed by that Yaep fella, and a Warchild poster signed by the crew at Maximum Press!

Third Prize (30 winners)

A Warchild poster signed by that funky Maximum Press team!

MAXIMUM PRESS™

So, how do ya win, already? Simple. Just answer the trivia question on the official entry form (try reading *Warchild* #1 for a clue), then fill out the the rest of the form, and mail it off to:

Warchild Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

CONTEST

Official Warchild Entry Form

This contest expires April 28, 1995! So, get off yer duff already!

I am:

NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE)

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

Who is the Black Knight's master?

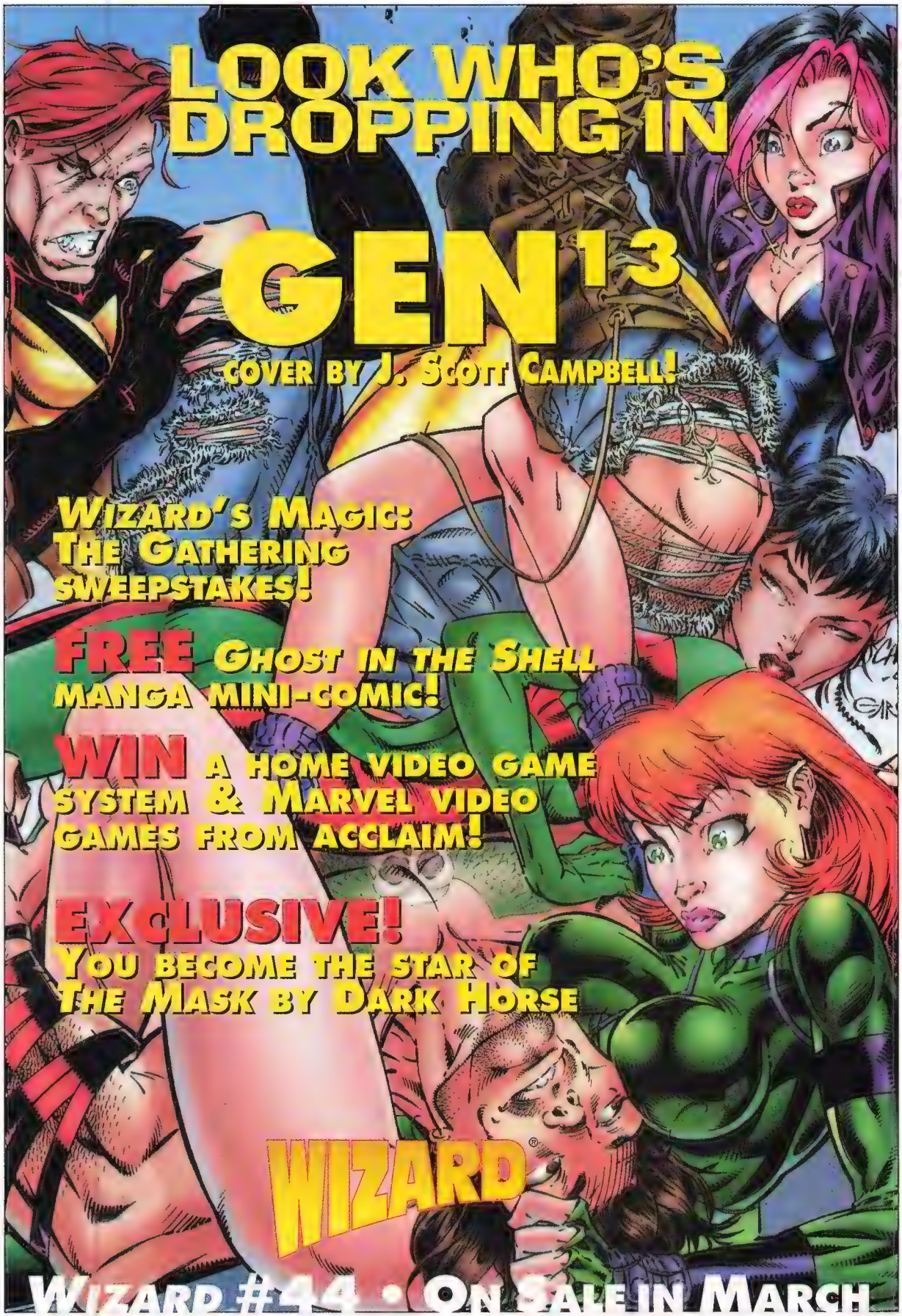
ANSWER

Legal Lingo

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Maximum Press, Extreme Studios, their immediate families, and people who think THEY created Cable. It's the '90s, buddy. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and answer to the Warchild trivia question on the official entry form, a standard postcard, or a three-by-five-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Warchild Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Hey, are them Warchild fellas the same guys from that preview story in *Wizard* #23? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by April 28, 1995**. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on May 1, 1995 by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after May 19, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Warchild Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

All artwork and characters ™ & © DC Comics



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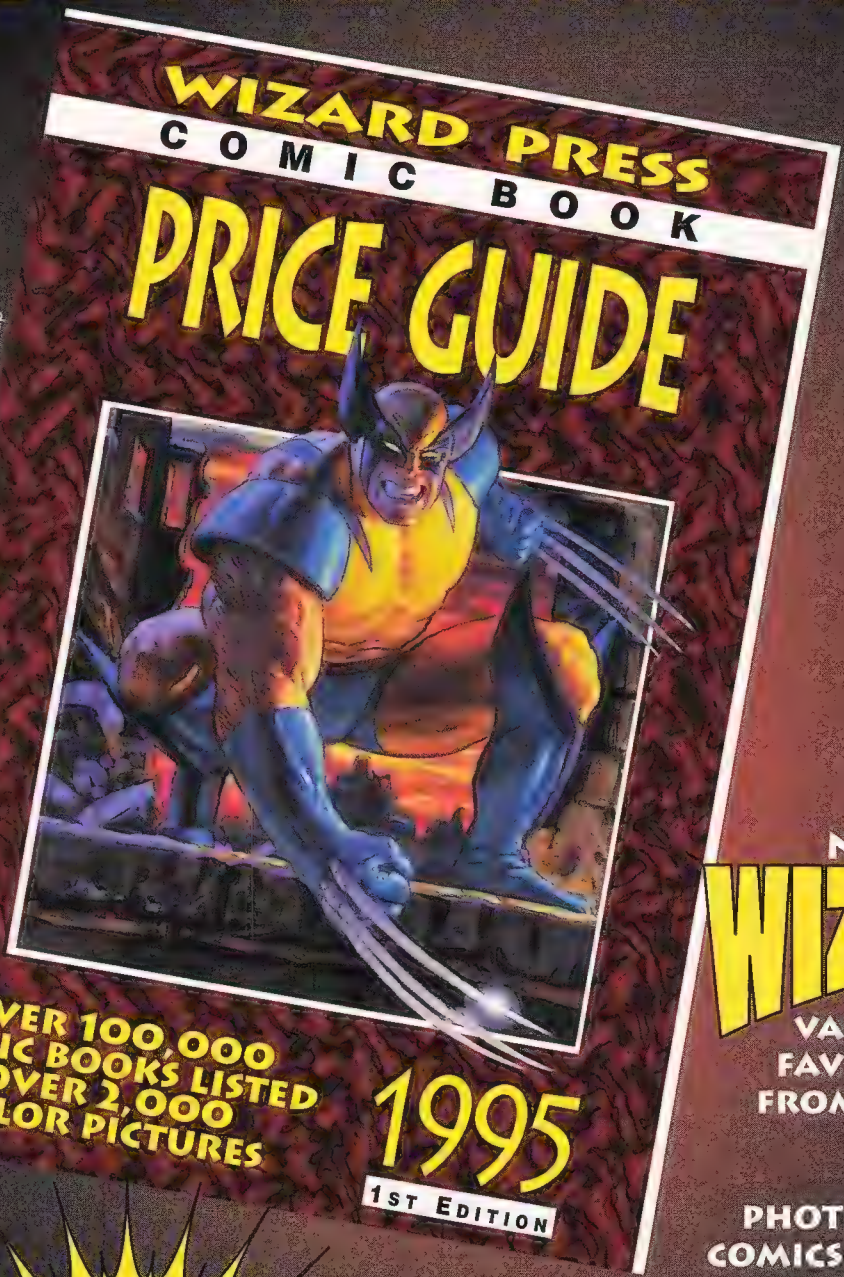

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Just answer the five Doctor Strange questions on the coupon correctly and you'll be entered into a drawing to receive one of ten subscriptions to Doctor Strange for one year! And, as if that wasn't just what the doctor ordered, all entries are automatically submitted to our mega-cool grand prize drawing where you can win:

Grand Prize—10 subscriptions to any Marvel Comics plus a pulse-pounding piece of original Doctor Strange artwork from the book (One winner)!

2nd Prize—Doctor Strange Marvel Masterworks signed by Stan Lee plus your choice of four subscriptions to any Marvel Comics (One winner)

3rd Prize—Doctor Strange Marvel Masterworks signed by Stan Lee (One winner)

So what are you waiting for? Just fill out the necessary paperwork and hopefully you'll be seeing a subscription to the Doctor in the near future. Entries must be postmarked by March 7th, 1995 and sent to:

Doctor Strange Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY—10920-2064

OFFICIAL STRANGE CONTEST ENTRY COUPON

Q1: What is Doctor Stephen Strange's middle name?
A1: _____

Q2: Who did Doctor Strange recently defeat to regain his title of Sorcerer Supreme?
A2: _____

Q3: Who were the Ancient One's three protégés before Doctor Strange studied under him?
A3: _____

Q4: Which of Doctor Strange's magical servitors was charged with the task of gathering mystical artifacts?
A4: _____

Q5: Whom does Wong think the winged creature called Xaos to be?
A5: _____

I am: (Please print clearly)
Name _____
Date of Birth _____
Age _____
Home Address _____
_____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (Don't Forget Your Area Code) _____

Legal Hooh-Hah
All entries must be received by March 7th, 1995. Limit one entry per envelope. No purchase necessary. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, and your telephone number with area code on the official entry form, or a 3 X 5 index card with the quiz answers. Contest open to US residents only, except employees of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP and WIZARD PRESS, any affiliated companies' promotional and advertising agencies and their families are not eligible. All entrants grant to the sponsors permission to use their name and likeness in advertising and promotion for the contest. Winners will be drawn on or about March 15th, 1995 and will be notified by telephone and/or mail. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited by law. MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP and WIZARD PRESS are not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winner's List available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to "Winners List-Doctor Strange Contest," c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. Winners shall be responsible for all applicable taxes. Void where prohibited by law. Contest sponsored by MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. and WIZARD PRESS.

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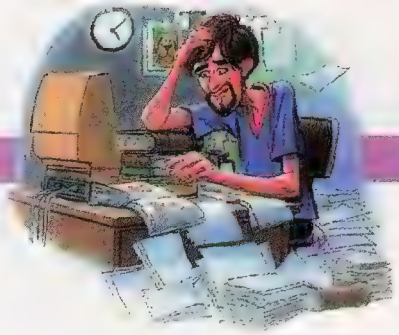
PALMER'S PICKS



Mazzucchelli's Born Again

After an absence of almost a year from comics, David Mazzucchelli, the creator and publisher of *Rubber Blanket*, has returned. Mazzucchelli is probably most familiar to *Wizard* readers who remember his stunning artwork on the "Born Again" storyline from *Daredevil* #227-#233 and "Batman: Year One," which ran in *Batman* #404-#407, both in collaboration with writer Frank Miller. Following these popular mainstream projects, Mazzucchelli, along with co-editor Richmond Lewis, started *Rubber Blanket*, an anthology featuring stories by Mazzucchelli and "a few people."

The post-modern subjects and expressionistic artwork of *Rubber Blanket* are a definite departure from Mazzucchelli's mainstream work. As a result, most people thought he disappeared off the face of the Earth after his collaborations with Miller. Mazzucchelli has a different view of the situation. "Even though I actually did go to art school and college, I wasn't studying comics then," he explains. "If you look at my 'comics' education, I feel that *Daredevil* was my undergraduate studies, *Batman* was my graduate studies, and everything after that is what I was studying for."

Mazzucchelli started *Rubber Blanket* to get some hands-on experience with the printing process. "Part of the reason behind self-publishing [*Rubber Blanket*] is that I wanted to be on-press to make decisions about paper, choice of ink, and design of the artwork for the printing press."

In fact, *Rubber Blanket* was named for a specific part used in the printing process. Mazzucchelli explains, "In offset lithography, which is the way the book is printed, around one of the cylinders [in the printing press,] is a rubber blanket. That's the whole crux of why offset lithography is the way it is. The impression of the ink goes onto the rubber blanket, and then onto the paper. It's a two-step process."

Most of Mazzucchelli's stories in *Rubber Blanket* blend the humanities and the sciences.

Most of Mazzucchelli's stories in *Rubber Blanket* blend the humanities and the sciences. For example, in "Discovering America" from *Rubber Blanket* #2, a young cartographer ponders the real truth behind the maps we make and use. As Mazzucchelli sees it, "My stories are generally stuff that's been kicking around in my head for a long time." His fascination with philosophical questioning comes from a genuine interest on his part. "I guess I've always had an interest in hard fact on the one hand, and speculation and the intuitive on the other; how they blend and how they contradict each other."

But before you notice Mazzucchelli's eloquent, quiet stories, the most striking element of *Rubber Blanket* is the two-color artwork. This unique package poses some interesting artistic challenges. "It forces you to think in very graphic terms." According to Mazzucchelli, when restricted to two colors, the artist needs to concentrate on "designing images in a simple, readable, clearly defined way. In my case, I'm always trying to see how much I can get out of the limitations. It's kind of interesting to set up parameters and work inside them. It's a challenge choosing two colors that are going to work off each other."

The two-color process of *Rubber Blanket* provides Mazzucchelli with two different options. He can either pick a single color to compliment the black line, or he can choose two colors that can blend into a third color. This first choice is aesthetically pleasing to Mazzucchelli. "I also like that what I'm getting is the simplicity of the black line, but using that second color is simultaneously a half-tone and a color. Sometimes it could work just as gray, and sometimes it can actually work as light in a color sense."

Mazzucchelli's other color option also has its mer-

Mazzucchelli's "Discovering America."

By Tom Palmer Jr.

its. "The blending of the two into a third color presents more of a challenge, but that makes it all the more interesting." In the end, the choice between the two options boils down to "choosing what's the appropriate color for the story, and how it's going to work in different scenes."

Despite this penchant for two-color art, Mazzucchelli's most recent work has been in simple black-and-white line. He worked closely with Paul Karasik to adapt Paul Auster's postmodern detective novel, *City of Glass*. For Mazzucchelli, working on *City of Glass* "involved making a decision that [concerned] a project I wanted to work on, that is going to be marketed and packaged through bookstores as a serious piece of fiction. We can show people that comics of this length and scope are worth their time, that there's nothing wrong with the form intrinsically."

Mazzucchelli also applies this pursuit of acceptability and respect over to *Rubber Blanket* (he is currently working on the next issue, which, at the earliest, will be out next summer). "I'm trying to create a package that creates a new kind of context for comics, or at least a different context for comics. I'm very interested in trying to get new readers; people who don't normally read comics, or who read them years ago and gave them up. My standard joke line is that I'm trying to create a package that won't scare adults."

If you have any questions or comments, please write to me at Palmer's Picks, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920. ☆

Above: Monsieur Absurde with his wife, Semolina Pilchard.
Top right: Mope and Grope.

PICK OF THE MONTH

***Welcome to the Zone*—**How could you pass up a new graphic novel by David Chelsea, the creator of *David Chelsea in Love*? This time, Chelsea lends his stippled artwork to a tale of mutants and folk singers running rampant in New York City, with surreal, bizarre, hilarious, and sometimes disturbing results. Pick up a copy at your local store or get in touch with Kitchen Sink Press at 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, MA 01060.

Tom Palmer Jr. is a freelance writer born and raised in the wilds of New Jersey.

David Mazzucchelli's Recommended Reading: Here's a rundown of some of David Mazzucchelli's favorite artists: Ben Katchor (*Julius Knipl: Real Estate Photographer*, appearing in various places, including *The Village Voice*), Evan Dorkin (*Milk & Cheese* and *Hectic Planet*), Los Bros Hernandez (*Love & Rockets*), Chris Ware (*Acme Novelty Library*), Dylan Horrocks (*Pickle*), Adrian Tomine (*Optic Nerve*), Chester Brown (*Underwater*), and Jason Stephens (*Atomic City Tales*).

"I also try to read a lot of the classic strips to catch up on things that I've missed, like E.C. Segar's *Popeye*, and Chester Gould's *Dick Tracy*, which is just wonderful, and of course, George Herriman's *Krazy Kat*."

Tom's Recommended Reading

***Rubber Blanket*:** Three issues of this over-sized, semi-annual, quasi-anthology have been published so far. All three feature at least one long story by Mazzucchelli, and work by other cartoonists, including co-editor Richmond Lewis, Ted Stearn, and David Hornung. If your local comic shop does not carry *Rubber Blanket*, you can order it directly from Rubber Blanket Press at PO Box 3067, Uptown Station, Hoboken, NJ 07030. The first issue is 48 pages and goes for $5.75, the second is 56 pages at $7.75, and the third weighs in at 72 pages for $8. To cover postage, please include $1.50 for your first book, and $.50 for each additional issue.

***City of Glass*:** David Mazzucchelli collaborated with Paul Karasik on this 138-page adaptation of Paul Auster's novel. The book is the first part of Bob Callahan's *Neon Lit: Noir Illustrated* series from Avon Books. There are also adaptations of Barry Gifford's *Perdita Durango*, and William Lindsay Gresham's *Nightmare Alley* in the works. You can look for *City of Glass* in your local bookstore, or you can order a copy from the Fantagraphics Books catalog. Write to them at 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115 and ask for their catalog.

Miscellaneous: Mazzucchelli's work has also appeared in several anthologies. He has a story, as well as covers and endpapers, in *Drawn & Quarterly* (vol. 2) #2, which is on sale now. The *Best of Drawn & Quarterly* reprints a Mazzucchelli strip from the first volume of *Drawn & Quarterly*, as well as work by Maurice Vellekoop, Seth, Debbie Drechsler, and Michael Dougan. For information on ordering these titles, write to Drawn & Quarterly Publications, 5550 Jeanne Mance St. #16, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4K6. There are also Mazzucchelli strips in *Snake Eyes* and *Snake Eyes III* from Fantagraphics, and various issues of *Nozone* (write to PO Box 1124, Knickerbocker Station, New York, NY 10002 for information on *Nozone*). You can also find Mazzucchelli's work regularly in *The New Yorker*.

"Discovering America," Monsieur Absurde, Semolina Pilchard, Mope, and Grope ™ & © Rubber Blanket Press

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

Hey kids, it's time once again to dust off the cobwebs and put alla them years of readin' comics to the test! What follows are 25 of the hardest questions ever slapped together by a band of dangerously hormonal fanboys.

This time around, we're grading you against the lamest excuse for not doing your homework. The higher your score, the lamer the excuse.

score	rank
0-5	Elvis has it.
6-12	Galactus ate my planet, and my homework was on it!
13-19	Homework...made...of...Kryptonite!
20-24	My dog ate it, and even though I gutted him like a Tauntaun, I couldn't find it.
25	I listened to all the Image artists who said they didn't need to go to school to be an artist.

1. Who is Legion's mom?
A) Moira MacTaggert
B) Lilandra
C) Gabrielle Haller
D) Storm (Oooo...Charlie had jungle fever!)

2. Which daughter of a supervillain has the hots for Robin?
A) Poison Eve
B) Talia
C) Cat Girl
D) Spoiler

3. Prior to his web-swinging days, who did Peter Parker defeat in a wrestling ring?
A) Mad-Dog Murphy
B) The Mighty Mongo
C) Crusher Hogan
D) George "The Animal" Steele

4. Aquaman recently lost his left hand thanks to:
A) A school of nasty little piranhas.
B) A fishing accident.
C) A cruise liner's propeller.
D) His reaching for a krueller the same time as Roseanne. Poor fool.

5. What "rolls down stairs, alone or in pairs, all over your neighbor's dog"?
A) Bacon
B) Slinky
C) Wilfred Brimley
D) Log

6. In *Spawn/Batman*, the Caped Crusader's pet name for ol' Spawny is:
A) Twit.
B) Scumbag.
C) Nitwit.
D) Snuggums.

7. Which member of the Justice League Task Force recently transformed into a woman?
A) Nightwing
B) Martian Manhunter
C) Flash
D) Who cares? We wanna know who cast that guy (?) from *The Crying Game* as the bad guy in *StarGate*. Yeah, real scary.

8. In Topps's splendiferous *Lone Ranger and Tonto* mini-series, Sheriff Barrett offers the Ranger the scalp of:
A) Cavendish.
B) Tonto's sister.
C) Silver.
D) Patrick Stewart (and thinking it's a swim cap, he puts it on, gets buck-nekkid, and takes a dip in a rain barrel).

9. Which hero and partner are incorrectly matched?
A) Archer and Armstrong
B) Ambush Bug and Cheeks the Toy Wonder
C) Captain America and Bucky
D) Madman and Madwoman

10. In *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, what is Robin's real name?
A) Kelley Fisher
B) Carrie Kelly
C) Barbara Gordon
D) Carrie Fisher

11. What is Phoney Bone's real name?
A) Phonacity J. Bone
B) Phonicious T. Bone
C) Phoncible P. Bone
D) Mac-Daddy

12. Captain Jean DeWolff was killed by:
A) Sin-Eater.
B) The Scourge.
C) Green Goblin.
D) High cholesterol. Them donuts are murder.

13. In the Sandman's first issue, who did Roderick Burgess try to summon from beyond, when he mistakenly called upon Dream?
A) The Devil
B) Destruction
C) Death
D) Elvis, but since he's not really dead and just in space, they couldn't get him.

14. During "Emerald Twilight," how did Hal (That traitorous rat bastard!) get Boodikka's Green Lantern ring?
A) He knocked her out, and then slipped it off her finger.

BACKGROUND ™ & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS

B) He tricked her into giving it to him.
C) He just chopped off her whole freakin' hand!
D) He whispered sweet nothings in her ear, then whammo, grabbed it when she got all mushy and stuff.

15. *John Byrne's Next Men* is written by:
A) Todd McFarlane.
B) Peter David.
C) John Byrne.
D) Ego, the living planet.

16. Which of the following dead *Doom 2099* villains was recently resurrected as a mindless cyborg?
A) Tiger Wylde
B) Fever
C) The Necrotek
D) Marvel's 2099 books are still around? Really? Wow.

17. In *X-Men* (vol. 1) #1, which flirtatious mutant tried to be the first to welcome Jean Grey to the fold, by giving her a little smooch, only to be telekinetically thrown across the room?
A) Scott "I'm gonna bag her in a few years" Summers
B) Hank "Y'know what they say about guys with big feet" McCoy
C) Bobby "Wanna see a neat trick with this Flavor Ice™?" Drake
D) Warren "I can buy any woman I want" Worthington III

18. The first villain Captain Carrot and the Zoo Crew successfully defeated in their premiere issue was:
A) Bovine Betty.
B) Salad Man.
C) Starro the Conqueror.
D) Cancellation. (No, wait, they didn't defeat that. Sorry.)

19. Supergirl (the current one) used to roll in the hay with what not-so-nice supervillain?
A) Mirror Master
B) The Eradicator
C) Lex Luthor
D) Bloodsport

20. The recently deceased and babelicious Justice Leaguer Ice first appeared in:
A) *Justice League International* #14.
B) *Super Friends* #9.
C) *Justice League Europe* #1.
D) *New Teen Titans* (vol. 2) #26.

21. Who killed the mutant Destiny?
A) Daniel Haller
B) Wolverine
C) Sabretooth
D) Silly, you can't kill a member of the Endless.

22. Which Titan (as opposed to any readers) lived through the Titans Hunt?
A) Jericho
B) Golden Eagle
C) Danny Chase
D) Terra

23. This character has not gotten any younger throughout his/her life:
A) Illyana Rasputin.
B) Jonah Hex.
C) The Atom.
D) Storm.

24. During Tony Stark's alcoholic days, who took over as Iron Man?
A) James Rhodes
B) Steve Rogers
C) Arno Stark
D) Jack Daniels

25. What was Han Solo's job prior to being a smuggler?
A) Bounty hunter
B) Rebel freedom fighter
C) Imperial Navy officer
D) Wookie proctologist ☆

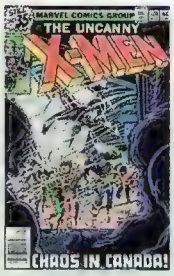
1.C	2.D	3.C	4.A	5.D	6.A	7.B	8.B	9.D	
10.B	11.C	12.A	13.C	14.C	15.C	16.A	17.B	18.C	
19.C	20.B	21.A	22.D	23.B	24.A	25.C			

A N S W E R S

DARKSTARS ™ & © DC COMICS. SHE-HULK AND UNCANNY X-MEN ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

MISSING LINK

WIN! *Uncanny X-Men #120*



Each month, we list three comic book issues that contain something in common: in content, characters, creators, or the like. Your job is to tell us what that something is.

For example, what do *Uncanny X-Men* #144, *Marvel Team-Up* #122, and *She-Hulk* (vol. 2) #8 all have in common? That's easy: all three feature guest appearances by the Man-Thing.

Get the idea? We'll randomly select an entry out of all the correct ones we receive. The winner of this month's contest will receive *Uncanny X-Men* #120, the first appearance of Alpha Flight! So good luck, and good sleuthing!

Here are this month's batch o' books:

Darkstars #23

She-Hulk #59

Unc. X-Men #315

Send all entries to:
Missing Link #43
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118
***Hurry!* All entries must be received by March 31, 1995**

CONGRATULATIONS to Chris Tirona, of Santa Monica, Calif., the winner of issue #38's Missing Link! Chris read the three issues—*Fantastic Four* #170, *Man-Thing* #15, and *Uncanny X-Men* #142—and realized they all featured a blind character! Good going, Chris!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and anyone who thought *Bionic Ever After?* was an awesome TV-movie. You must have swallowed your remote! Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the Missing Link on a three-by-five-inch index card or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Missing Link #43, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Limit one entry per envelope. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. The words heard most often in the *Wizard* offices lately: "Chapin's on Carson tonight! I mean Leno!!!" **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by March 31, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on April 3, 1995, by Wizard Press. All decisions are final.

For the name of the winner, available after April 14, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Missing Link #43 Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch this column!

the WIZARD OF CARDS

By Stephen Shamus

Marvel Heavy Metal

Marvel Metal cards from Fleer will be hitting shops the first week of April. This is an all-new technology-driven brand line for the company. Fleer's chase cards in all of its brand lines (including its sports cards) have been so popular lately, that what we now have is a set that looks like it's made up of pure chase cards. Every card in this series is engraved, 3–D, printed on Prismatic foil, foil-stamped, and laminated. Now that's a tough card to beat! Like the Flair cards, all cards feature computer-enhanced artwork, which does wonders for the original artwork. Backs feature Power Ratings, so now we can find out for sure whether or not Iron Man can actually beat the X-Men (and it's about freakin' time, too). The 138-card set features all-new artwork penciled by George Pérez, Ron Lim, Darick Robertson, and Ken Lashley. Eight-card packs won't set you back the same $4 as Flair, only a fraction of that at a meager $2.49. But wait, there's more. You'll also find a number of random chase cards, which are as follows:

•138-card Silver Flashers [One in every pack]—This parallel set is the same as the regular one, except, of course, for the silver foil-etched backgrounds.

•18-card Metal Blasters [One in every two packs]—This set makes the characters appear to blast off the cards through the use of foil.

•18-card Gold Blasters [One in every three packs]—This set is a parallel version of the Metal Blaster chase set, with the only difference being a gold foil-etched background.

SkyBox is producing perhaps the coolest box of all time, with its release of *The Adventures of Batman & Robin* set based on the animated show. The box is die-cut in a manner which, when perforated, becomes the Batmobile. The packs actually sit in the Batmobile. The chase cards themselves are also made to sit in the Caped Crusader's car, so these characters get to sit in the coolest vehicle around. The normal header of the box becomes a backdrop of Gotham City when the box is completed. Now, onto the set itself–a 90-card set featuring cels from the show. The chase cards are 12 pop-ups (similar to SkyBox's *Lion King* chase cards) of the lead characters that are found one in every 13 packs (These are the cards that are made to "sit" in the Batmobile box.) and nine foil cards found once every 11 packs. There's also one Dark Knight heat-sensitive card, found one in 180 packs, that reveals a secret about Batman when you rub your finger over the blackened area of the card. Eight-card packs should sell for about $1.49 apiece. Look for these babies in mid-March.

Lois & Clark cards will be on the shelves the first week of February. SkyBox is producing this 90-card set, which spotlights the popular TV show starring Dean Cain and Teri Hatcher. The digitally-transferred art will keep the pictures crisp and clean when they hit the cardboard. Eight-card packs will set you back a measly $1.19 (Geez, I can't believe $1.19 is measly nowadays). Chase cards include nine foil cards with more scenes from the show at a rate of one per seven packs, as well as six foil-enhanced Holochip cards, painted by Julie Bell and Boris Vallejo (three pieces each artist) that come packed one per 15 packs. The paintings are of the lead characters and are designed to look more like the comic book characters than their TV counterparts.

Yet another *Star Trek* set is on the way, this one being one of the longest titles yet for an entertainment card set. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* The Episodes Collection Season 2 will be on store shelves in mid-March and set you back about $1.29 for eight cards. The 90-card set will include three cards each from 27 episodes, plus a nine-card subset on Troi and Riker. Randomly inserted in packs are six foil-embossed character cards at a rate of one in 12 packs, and two animated holograms of Troi and Riker that come packed one in 180 packs (Yowza!).

Rob Liefeld's popular team, Youngblood, will be featured in a card set produced by SkyBox for the first time. As you might remember, though, back in 1992, Comic Images produced a 90-card series. The new SkyBox set will be 90 cards, show-

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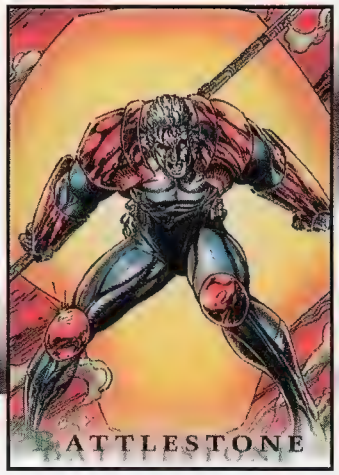
Surprise! More Fleer Marvel cards.

™ & © Rob Liefeld



SkyBox presents the Youngblood card set.

casing all-new art with five Wiggle cards (magic-motion cards that show you a second picture when you turn them) inserted at one in eight packs. The ever-popular SkyDisc makes its return here, this time featuring Badrock, and these puppies will come only one in every two boxes. Also, Instant Winner cards are inserted one in two boxes, with a chance to win an all-expenses paid trip to California to visit and hang with Rob and the Extreme boys. Six-card packs will sell for $1.19 and boxes will contain only 24 packs, in order to encourage box sales. For those with *lots* of money to spend, you can buy a whole case, which contains a full-sized SkyDisc of Badrock that is sealed in plastic and is individually numbered out of 5,000. These are shipping in April.

As discussed last month, SkyBox is producing a 90-card series based on Disney's hit animated show, *Gargoyles*. More info to come soon, but this product will be out in late February.

Collector's Edge, a popular football card manufacturer, is releasing its first two entertainment sets ever, based on this summer's Sly Stallone blockbuster, *Judge Dredd*, as well as the comic book series by the same name. Collector's Edge is calling this new brand of entertainment cards Edge Entertainment. Dredd is the "future of law enforcement," and the set should be out around springtime of 1995. Stallone's last movie card set, *Demolition Man*, which was similar in theme to *Judge Dredd*, was produced by SkyBox but didn't sell very well, probably because the movie wasn't very good. Let's hope this one is.

The *Star Trek* Trading Card game from Decipher has been an unbelievable success at the retail level, so much so that the series has now gone into a second print. The original "limited" edition black-bordered cards are selling for over $800 a set, with Data and Picard leading the way at about $70-$80 each. Booster packs are selling for about $7 per pack now. The new "unlimited" editions are selling for about 1/3 of the prices of the "limited" editions and have white borders.

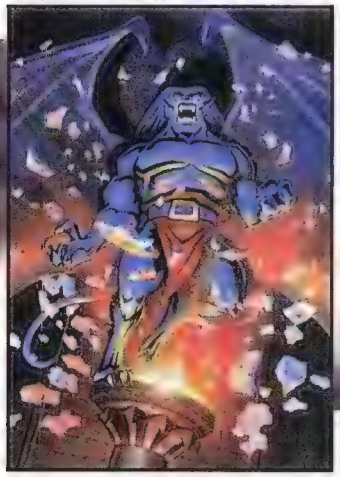
Jyhad has not been the success story that *Magic: The Gathering* has been for Wizards of the Coast. Richard Garfield apparently couldn't pull off another "Magic" trick, but that's OK, since the latest extension to *Magic*, *Fallen Empires*, is flying off the shelves at a pace quicker than grilled Atogs on a stick. *Fallen Empires* is a solid item at around $2 a pack.

Fleer has announced that it has acquired two new big licenses. The company is going to be producing cards based on the Valiant Universe and this year's most anticipated movie, *Batman Forever*, starring Val Kilmer as Batman. This is a big surprise, considering that Marvel owns Fleer, and both DC and Valiant are two of Marvel's biggest competitors. SkyBox currently holds an exclusive DC Comics card license, but since this is a movie set, it doesn't fall under this license's umbrella.

Despite extensive physical therapy, Stephen Shamus, co-publisher of Collector's Sportslook, *still runs like a big, goofy duck.*

™ & © DC Comics

Lois and Clark trading cards will fly into stores this February.



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And more stuff from SkyBox, this time featuring Disney's *Gargoyles*.

BONE™ by JEFF SMITH

- *90 full color Chromium fronts and backs.*
- *Randomly inserted Jeff Smith autograph cards.*
- *6 MagnaChrome™ chase cards.*
- *A rare 3-card subset and a Limited Edition Medallion Card.*

TM & ©1995 Jeff Smith. Item No. 55000

Bone and Phantom are the real deal. And you'll find out why this April when we present their exciting new series.

Bone™, the award-winning creation of Jeff Smith, chronicles the adventures of Fone, Smiley and Phoney Bone.

The Bone II All-Chromium series continues the Bone saga with 90 all new cards painted by Bone colorist David Reed.

When you're talking about classic superheros, you're talking about the Phantom. Created almost 40 years ago by legendary Lee Falk, "The Ghost Who Walks" appears in over 1,000 papers worldwide and in a major Marvel Comic Series.

New Bone. New Phantom. This April from Comic Images. For positive results, call us.

COMIC IMAGES

The PHANTOM™

- *6 Chromium Cards™.*
- *Randomly inserted 24-Karat Gold Lee Falk Signature Card.*
- *Limited Edition Medallian Card.*
- *Subsets include: 9-card Phantom subset created by Dynamic Marketing, the Phantom card company in Australia.*
- *Classic artwork from the Phantom Archives.*
- *New art from the hot Marvel Comic Series.*
- *The Phantom origin story.*

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Reminder: A great way to keep your collection fresh is with Comic Images new 3-ring binders. Look for them!

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

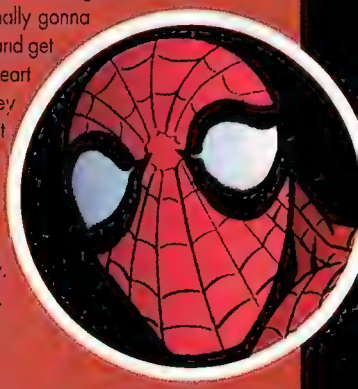
This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay any attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1. SPAWN

Is it just me or does Spawny here look more and more like a scarecrow hopped up on steroids every day? You'd think that with his godlike powers, the first thing he'd do is fix that ugly puss! The guy can teleport people and visit Hell, for crying out loud! So, why can't he lose that pigskin of a face and grow a new one? And secondly, what does he need teeth for? It's not like he needs to eat or anything. Sheesh. Anyway, for the umpteenth-billion time, Spawn is riding the popularity wave and bringing good cheer to all good boys and girls around the world. That McFarlane guy continues to add to his success, as his new toy line, as well as talk of a TV series, can only add to this guy's popularity.

2. SPIDER-MAN

Awww! How could anybody resist those puppy dog eyes? Spidey's just sooooo cute! In fact, I'd even say he's cuter than Ms. Lion from *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends* (you know, the eighth little superhero? Ten bucks to anybody who knows what we're talking about.) But what could make ol' Web-Head here, who's still pretty popular, so depressed? It's probably because a certain Parker is going to bite the big one this month. Maybe Aunt May's finally gonna have one too many Ho-Hos™ and get that fatal (and long-deserved) heart attack. Oh man, then Spidey wouldn't get to fight for Aunt May, and push his adrenaline to the max while shouting, "Must...do it...for...Aunt May!" Oh, and she also wouldn't even get to see the new Spider-Baby. Sigh. Now I'm depressed, too.

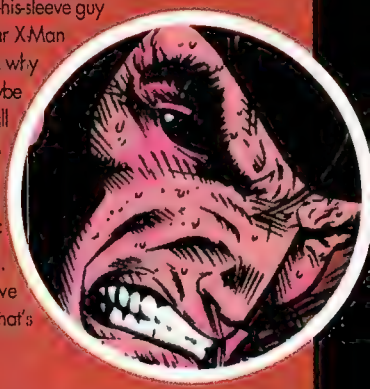


3. WOLVERINE

"Hey, kids! Welcome to Wolvie's World o' Fun! Boy, are we gonna have a good time today. Why, we'll watch some keen cartoons, bake some mighty fine snicker doodles, and learn how to get those stinky pet odors out of your carpet! Gosh, I just looooooove kids." Hey, settle down there, fang-face. The bestest X-Man there is continues to be hot stuff with the kiddies, even after losing a hand! Now, that's charisma. Logan here is supposed to play a pretty big role in the "After Xavier" storyline, and that, along with his own book slowly approaching the 100th mark, has just gotta juice up the excitement.

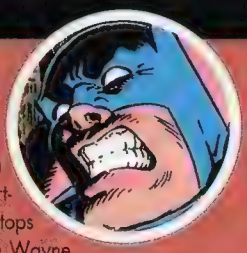
4. GAMBIT

"I'm-Gambit-the-Cajun-man...I'm-Gambit-the-Cajun-man...I-fight-to-the-finish, 'cause-I-eats-me-spinach. I'm-Gambit-the-Cajun-man...Toot-toot!" Gosh, I never knew that the ol' squinter Popeye was from Louisiana. Who'da thunk it? Anyway, fresh off his appearances in Rogue's mini-series, the ace-up-his-sleeve guy is still the second most popular X-Man around. And come to think of it, why is he always throwin' aces? Maybe he buys a deck made up of all aces, or gets like 97 decks, pulls out all the aces, and shoves 'em up his sleeve. Just once, I'd like to see him throw a queen of spades, or a four of clubs. Though maybe the aces have more potential energy. Yeah, that's gotta be it. Good ol' physics.



Spider-Man, Wolverine, and Gambit ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Spawn is a registered trademark of Todd McFarlane Productions Inc. Spawn © Todd McFarlane Productions Inc.

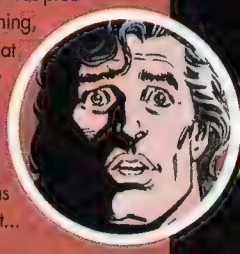
5. BATMAN



Unnrgh! Looks like Alfred starched the Dark Knight's tights once too often. Ha ha!Next thing ya know, he'll be short-sheetin' Bruce's bed, and loosenin' the tops off alla the salt and pepper shakers in Wayne Manor. With all the shake-ups the Caped Crusader's dealt with over the past year or two—his back gettin' broke, Azrael taking over and going ballistic, Bruce coming back to tell Jean-Frog that he did a no-no, and then Dick Grayson taking over the mantle—it's no wonder this guy is so popular! We also heard that during his break, he visited the lot of *Batman Forever*, and taught Val Kilmer a thing or two about being a creature of the night.

6. SUPERMAN

Well, it looks like the Big "S" has finally figured out who's behind that other Superman thing. Either that or he just saw Lois nekkid. Wahooo! Anyway, what with all the crap this guy's been through lately, it's no wonder he looks dumbfounded. He was probably still recuperating from that whole death thing, when Brainiac implemented his grand scheme that drove Supes crazy. Add the fact that some nasty guy is gonna find out that Clark Kent is really Superman, and, well, you've got a strong case for temporary insanity. Whatever the outcome, you know that the high-flyin' Kryptonian will be as popular as ever. Now if he'd only get a haircut...

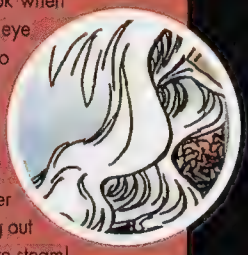


7. PITT

Heh! Better be careful there, Pitt, looks like you're coughing up a lung! Or maybe that's what happens when Pitt gets the equivalent of a nosebleed. Ya know, that's pretty darn gross when you think about it. 'Cause if that's how he has a bloody nose, imagine what happens when he sneezes. Yucch! Anyway, I'm damn sick of telling you why this guy is so popular every single month, especially since his own book comes out like once every seven years. I'm also sick of these stupid no-nose jokes. You'd think we here at *Wizard* could come up with something just a little more mature, a little more intelligent to say about this guy. Like...umm...yeah.

8. LADY DEATH

Hey, it's a Cousin It reunion! Now *that's* a bad hair day. Believe it or not, there's really a purty li'l face under all them thar hair. But could anyone take the Queen of the Dead seriously when she looks like that? And where do you look when she's talkin' to ya? It's not that easy making eye contact, when the person you're speaking to doesn't have any eyes! Anyway, this Bad Girl isn't losing too much popularity these days, thanks to her major roles (and, boy, are they major!) in Evil Ernie's new *Revenge!* mini-series, as well as her own. Plus, with her new mini, *Between Heaven and Hell*, coming out this month, this lady's sure to gain even more steam!



9. SHI

Grrrrrowwwl! Talk 'bout yer babes! Who cares if she slices and dices people left and right? But how does she see with all that hair in her face? You'd think her aim'd be a little off. And how the hell do those dogs with all the hair in front of their eyes see anything? You know, the big hairy kind that look like walking mops. That can't be too sanitary. They're always getting food stuck in the hair around their mouths. And it's not like their butts are safe from things getting stuck and...this is *really* getting disgusting. Let's get back to the chick. Excellent scripting and art by Bill Tucci keeps this babe a consistent hit among the masses.

10. ROBIN

If ya cover up the Boy Wonder's hair, he's the spittin' image of Hal Jordan! Well, the Drakemeister, who's also auditioning for the lead in the *Sound of Music* ("the hiiiills are alive with the sound of Gooothaaam."), is hotter'n ever, thanks to his massive involvement in the "Prodigal" storyline running in all the Batman titles, and his encouraging support to Nightwing/Batman. (Do we call him "NiBats"?) Also, awesome storytelling by Chuck Dixon constantly keeps the Boy Wonder involved in Batman's whereabouts, so the continuity (y'know, DC's strong point) is really solid in those Batbooks. ☆

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month, or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

BAT LASH

Oh, Lord. Where the hell do these pieces of swill come from? "Bat Lash?" What a fruitcake! This here flower-sniffin' cowboy (Bartholomew Aloysius Lash to his friends) was brought up by his dad to be a tough guy, while his mom taught him the more refined things in life. So, basically, he was a *tough* pansy. After his folks's farm was swindled out from under them, good ol' Bat went down that revenge route, and ended up killing a crooked deputy in self defense. He quickly became an outlaw, and fled. When he returned home, he saw his old shack go up in flames and found out that his family hac been murdered. Bat Lash (almost rhymes with "jackass" if you say it fast enough) eventually avenged his parents' death and spent the rest of his days roaming the countryside seeking peace, yet always encountering trouble. Now *there's* a real hero for ya! Why, if I met him with that paisley vest and that fragrant flower of his, he'd have no problem beating me. I'd never hit a lady.

Batman, Superman, Bat Lash, and Robin ™ & © DC Comics. Pitt ™ & © Dale Keown. Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido. Shi ™ & © William Elliott Tucci.

QUESADA PALMIOTTI

number three

march

EVENT COMICS

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X-Men™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

X-Men (vol. 1) #97

Writer: ***Chris Claremont***
Artist: ***Dave Cockrum***
Publisher: ***Marvel Comics***
Release date: ***February 1976***

She's the woman who declared that Jean Grey must die. She's the longtime love of Professor Xavier, in a literally star-crossed romance. *And* she's one of the central figures in the "Legion Quest" storyline which gets the whole "After Xavier" timeflip universe going in all the X-books. She's Lilandra, and collectors may be starting to take this Shi'ar Majestrix (that's Empress, for you less informed) seriously. This book, which features the new "Generation 2" X-Men in one of the team's earliest adventures, is her first appearance, as she speeds through not only space, but Xavier's nightmares! This strong-willed woman, whose makeup may have inspired DC's Death character, is in charge of protecting the ultrapowerful M'krann Crystal, which will throw her right in the middle of the *Gambit and the X-Ternals* storyline, where Gambit's group goes after the crystal itself. She's also got a few mutant hearts pounding in *X-Men* (vol. 2) #40, with her dramatic revelation that Legion's actions in the past may destroy "the very fabric of all reality!" After several integral roles in major X-storylines over the years, Ms. Neramani's character has become stronger and stronger, and if there's ever been a sleeper character that collectors should keep their watchful eyes peeled for, Lilandra's it. So, this book—which has another first appearance bonus, that of another important timeflip character, Erik the Red—is one to watch.

Cerebus™ & © Dave Sim

Cerebus #161

Writer: ***Dave Sim and Jeff Smith***
Artist: ***Dave Sim, Gerhard, and Jeff Smith***
Publisher: ***Aardvark-Vanaheim***
Release date: ***August 1992***

What the? Isn't Cerebus that cute li'l aardvark guy who says things like "Gah" and stuff? So, what's this issue doing in Comic Watch? Well, if you mosey on back to the rear of the issue in question, you'll find a nifty little preview of Jeff Smith's outstanding comic, *Bone*. Now, the story isn't anything new (it actually reprints part of *Bone* #3), but it definitely brought some attention to Jeff Smith's cute little bunch o' cousins. (No, they're not Jeff's cousins, you silly. You know what we mean.) And for those *Bone* completists out there (y'know, the kind that hafta own every single thing that has anything to do with *Bone* at all—like the gum wrapper Jeff Smith just threw in the garbage can), this is an issue to grab. *Bone*, which Smith publishes himself under Cartoon Books, started off with quite a low print run. After word-of-mouth on the series got around, prices for first printings on the early issues just went ballistic. And as to just who the heck these guys are, well, there's Fone Bone, the cute romantic lead; Smiley Bone, the fun-lovin', dopey, carefree chap; and then there's Phoney Bone, a downright greedy, little rat. Why, he'd sell the fillings right out of Jeff Smith's teeth, just to get a mere bi-monthly appearance in a comic book. Anyway, with some great storytelling from that gnarly Smith dude, *Bone* is certainly a fabulous book, and this early appearance in the back of *Cerebus*, is definitely one to keep an eye on. ☆

PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS SHIPPING IN FEBRUARY!

Lady Death II: Between Heaven & Hell #1

Writer: ***Brian Pulido***
Artist: ***Steven Hughes***
Release Date: ***February***
Cover Price: ***$3.50***

Lady Death makes her triumphantly top-heavy return this month to face off against Purgatori, Lucifer's ex-main squeeze. "Readers are going to learn that Purgatori is a very, very, bad girl," says writer Brian Pulido. "This series will show why Lucifer had to ban her from Hell and why she's so totally out of control." As our Lady deals with that, she also meets a former ally, who now faces her as an enemy. *And* she must fend off a horrific mental attack when she loses control of the Eternal Graveyard and is forced to relive the most nightmarish moments from her former life as Hope, the demure Medieval daughter of Matthias.

New readers can jump right in, as the plot of this chromium-covered issue will explain much of Lady Death's past and recap where's she's been. But longtime fans will have their familiarity pay off, too: Key events from *Lady Death* #1/2, a *Wizard* exclusive, will play a pivotal role. By series end, readers will realize they've seen only the tip of the iceberg on this story so far. "The last issue will provide a hint of who her true adversaries are," Pulido reveals. "The entire momentum of the two mini-series and what she's been about for the last 400 years stands in direct opposition to higher gods, who reveal themselves at last."

The four-issue monthly series will skip April to ensure that issues ship as scheduled. But Pulido vows more stories will be following quickly. "The first year we got away with not having her in the market too much, but we can't get away with that anymore," he admits. "She's too popular not to be coming out regularly. We've got her future mapped out for years, and she's got some pretty interesting stuff coming up."

—Craig Shutt

Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido

Flash #100

FLASH™ & © DC COMICS

Writer: ***Mark Waid***
Artists: ***Salvador Larocca, Carlos Pacheco, & Jose Marzan Jr.***
Release Date: ***February***
Cover Price: ***$3.50 ($2.50 standard ed.)***

The six-part "Terminal Velocity" arc ends dramatically as Wally West passes to the other side of light, from which no speedster has ever returned. "Wally goes out in a really heroic, valiant moment," says writer Mark Waid. "It's a nice exit." Waitaminute—isn't he the star? Well...he *was*, but it looks like that might change. Or not. Whoever the Flash is now, he/she is totally in tune with the Speed Force and will exhibit a whole range of never-before-seen speed powers, Waid promises. The scope of those powers will begin to be revealed in #101. This month, the Flash has his/her hands full with Kobra, who has sealed off Keystone City and is overrunning America with his army. A host of DC heroes and speedsters are needed to stem the tide.

One is Bart Allen, better known as Impulse, who gets his own book later this month. In the first issue, Impulse goes with Max Mercury to the Deep South to train and learn the value of patience. Just what we need—another arrogant punk with powers. "By the end of 'Terminal Velocity,'" Waid points out, "all those people who hate Bart will see him in a new light." (For more on *Flash* #100 and *Impulse* #1, see the article on page 54.)

—CS

Prophet (vol. 2) #1

Writer: ***Chuck Dixon***
Artists: ***Stephen Platt & Mark Alquiza***
Release Date: ***February***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

"I'm a little nervous," artist Stephen Platt confides. "I've never done a #1 issue. But [writer] Chuck Dixon is exceptionally excited about being on the book, and I'm ecstatic that he's on board." Fans will be psyched, too, especially when they see the far-ranging concept behind the series. As the story unfolds, Prophet starts to remember things he couldn't know—or could he? "Prophet is something of a traveled man," Platt explains. "He's played a role in many events of historical significance in many time periods."

Not only will he experience these lives through flashbacks, hallucinations, and dreams, but he'll also visit them. "We're going to be using elements of time travel, magic and mysticism, and science fiction," Platt reveals. "His enemies will be chasing him through time from 5,000 years in the future to 5,000 years in the past. What makes the book unique is that we're going to flesh out parts of history that have always fallen to conjecture."

Platt also stresses that Prophet may not win all of his battles. "I think overcoming a defeat in battle can be just as heroic for a character. It's going to be a great series," he says. "I'm totally looking forward to drawing the different time periods. I'm getting lots of cool shots into the book, with good storytelling, too."

—CS

PROPHET ™ & © ROB LIEFELD INC.

The Mask #1

The Mask ™ & © Dark Horse Comics Inc.

Writer: ***John Arcudi***
Artists: ***Doug Mahnke & Keith Williams***
Release Date: ***February***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

Hot off of this summer's smash movie success comes an ongoing monthly title chronicling the adventures of the latest wearer of the mysterious green mask with the great big teeth. The title will work like DC Comics's *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*, presenting stories of varying lengths by a host of top-flight creators. First up is a five-parter by the original creators of the two previous mini-series.

"The monthly title gives us a clean slate to work with, but we do have a continuity from one story to the next," explains John Dennett, Dark Horse manager for company-owned books. "In some respects, it's the third part of the creator's trilogy, so long-time readers will recognize some characters. But the focal characters are brand-new, so anyone can pick it up and know what's going on."

Things start hopping right away, as the mask first adheres to a young anarchist who worships Big-Head (the original Mask) and craves the power. Since the mask exaggerates the wearer's own traits, and this guy is a comic book fan, readers are in for some wacky hi-jinks, says Dennett. "I'm not saying it happens, but his turning into a superhero may be inevitable. This is going to be a fun book to work on, and a fun book to read."

—CS

Vampirella/ShadowHawk: Creatures of the Night, Bks 1 & 2

Writers: ***T. Sniegoski (One) & J. Valentino (Two)***
Artists: ***A. Nichols, K. Van Wormer, & K. Aiken (One); J. Valentino (Two)***
Release Date: ***February***
Cover Price: ***$4.95 each***

"Everybody wants to date Vampirella," says Harris editor Meloney Crawford Chadwick, "but Jim Valentino is the first creator to come at me with a story that showed our characters interacting on a personal level." That story explodes during Harris's Vampirella Month, as Vampi meets ShadowHawk in what ShadowHawk creator Valentino calls, "a love story dripping in blood."

"They have a lot in common," Chadwick notes, "but there's a polarity that shows off their differences, too." One thing they have in common is that they're both vampires—after Vampi takes a bite out of ShadowHawk. "It's not a friendly nip, either," says Chadwick. Adds Valentino, "The characters are sort of yin and yang. They work together, they look good together; there's a lot of good contrast between the characters."

Well, frankly, one looks a whole lot better than the other, but what's important is that unlike other intercompany crossovers, these two parts tell a seamless stand-alone story. "It introduces new fans to either character while telling existing fans a great tale," explains Chadwick. Naturally, Harris's first half ships on Valentine's Day.

—CS

Vampirella ™ & © Harris Publications Inc. ShadowHawk ™ & © Jim Valentino.

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the peachiest titles shipping in February, as selected and written by the *Wizard* staff. Books marked with a check ✓ mark are comics that should not be overlooked on the often-cramped comic shelf.

Angela #3 (of 3)

IMAGE Y'know, what exactly DO you do if you're stuck in Hell, and there's a war goin' on? Guess we'll find out, and then some, 'cause that's exactly the situation Angela and Spawn find themselves in as they end up in the middle of a big-time mess in Hell. By Neil Gaiman and Greg Capullo. **$2.25**

Aquaman #8

DC COMICS When ol' Pin-Hand gets caught between Corona, a fire elemental, and Naiad, a water elemental, you just know the fish are gonna fry! Speaking of which, just how do they cook all their food down there underwater, 'cause as soon as they started a fire, wouldn't it go out immediately? And just what the hell are their toilets like? By Peter David, Martin Egeland, and Howard Shum. **$1.50**

Azrael #3

DC COMICS After narrowly avoiding death at the fists of the new Azrael, Jean Paul Valley (Sounds kinda like a salad dressing manufacturer, don't it?) finds himself at the Order of St. Dumas's Alpine cathedral, where he's offered the job as hit man once again. Good work if you can get it. By Denny O'Neil, Barry Kitson, and James Pascoe. **$1.95**

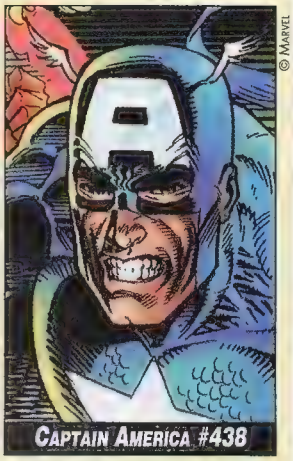
Babe 2 #1 (of 2)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Hey, in case you're sick an' tired of waitin' for Art Adams's *Monkeyman and O'Brien* mini-series that probably won't come out until the next millennium (C'mon, Art—fans're dyin' to see it!), this new mini-series has Babe taking on Monkeyman and O'Brien's nemesis, the Shrewmanoid and his band of cyborg alligators! Written and drawn by John Byrne. **$2.50**

Batman Books

DC COMICS In *Batman* #517, the Caped Crusader continues his hunt for the killer called the Sleeper, yet when he discovers her secret, ol' Bats might have to stop hunting after her! Then grab yerself a copy of *Detective* #684 and watch the Penguin and the Actuary concoct a plan that even Batman himself won't be able to stop, 'cause they pull it off in broad daylight, when Batman's never around! Head on over to *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #37, where Batman starts hunting for the Joker after a bunch of seemingly random kidnappings. (Also in this ish, the antagonistic Commissioner and Sarah Gordon have a less-than-lovely reunion, when they bump into each other while visiting the donut-guzzlin', laid-up-in-bed Sgt. Bullock.) To round off your monthly Dark Knight dosage, check out *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #70 for "Criminals," Part 2 (of 2). During one o' those prison riots (they've really got to beef up their security at these prisons!), Batman runs into a slight problem when the inmates have taken the warden hostage, and the only way they'll let him go is if Batman unmasks himself. **$1.50—*BATMAN, DETECTIVE*; $1.95—*B:SOTB, B:LOTDK***

© DC Comics
Batman Adventures #31


© Marvel
Captain America #438

✓ Batman Adventures #31

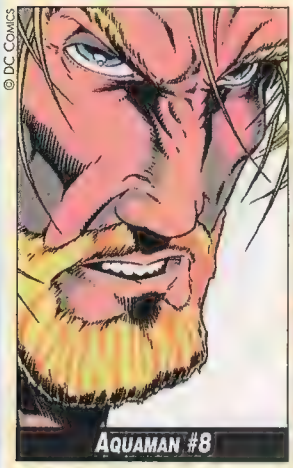
DC COMICS If you're one of those people (like me) wallowing in depression at the fact that *Batman: The Animated Series* was canceled, then stop your sniveling and pick up this book! With fantastic art and compelling stories (Geez, this sounds like a made-for-TV movie commercial!), this title is not one to miss. This issue, a villain begins kidnapping some powerful industrialists, including Bruce Wayne, so it's up to the Boy Wonder to save 'em all. By Alan Grant, Dev Madan, and Rick Burchett. **$1.50**

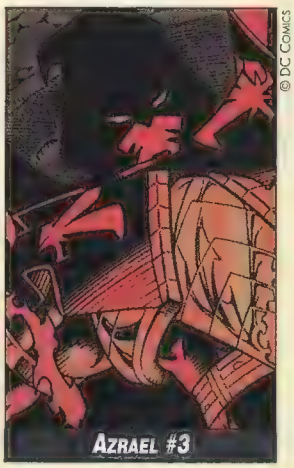
✓ Bone #18

CARTOON BOOKS The Bone cousins, Phoney Bone and Smiley Bone, join forces and go mug-to-mug with Lucius, the bar's owner, to determine who's the better barkeep. Considering that Phoney tried to rip off about 99 percent of the bar's customers, I'd stake my money on Lucius. Smith says of the ish, "*Bone* #17 was Gran'Ma Ben actually spilling the beans, now that I've been dragging people on. Well, that was part one. She finishes the story in [issue]18. Also, Smiley makes a big discovery." Sorry folks, that's about as much as I could weasel out of that Jeff Smith guy. Boy, is he ever cagey! **$2.95**

Captain America #438

MARVEL "The Dawn's Early Light" storyline begins with Cap don-


© DC Comics
Aquaman #8


© DC Comics
Azrael #3

MORE PICKS

© DC Comics
GREEN LANTERN #61

© Marvel
INCREDIBLE HULK #428

ning his new suit of armor (yay). He jumps right into the action with Free Spirit and Jack Flag to save Washington, D.C. from the Flag Smasher, one o' the coolest-lookin' villains in Cap's rogues gallery. By Mark Gruenwald, Dave Hoover, and Danny Bulanadi. **$1.50**

CYBERFORCE #11

IMAGE Uh-oh, seems like Cyberforce and the Huntsman have played right into Cyberdata's hand. Now how do ya suppose they're gonna get outta this predicament? Maybe a quart of mayonnaise and a plunger'll do the trick. By Chris Claremont and Marc Silvestri. **$1.95**

✓ GREEN LANTERN #61

DC COMICS Green Lantern and Darkstar (who was much cooler as Wonder Girl, by the way) get it on (no, not that way!) with Kalibak on Mars. Also, some guy calling himself Hal Jordan starts hitchhiking his way cross country. Now that's nice. Maybe he'll stop at the Grand Canyon just like the Bradys did, where they lost Bobby and Cindy and had to put beans in the flashlight and...By Ron Marz, Andy Smith, and Romeo Tanghal. Marz says of the ish, "Hopefully, issue #61 will give the readers their dose of action, as well as characterization, as we progress Donna and Kyle's relationship. The issue serves to keep Darkseid's eye on Kyle, which is kind of a subplot we want to bring along." **$1.50**

✓ ICON #24

DC COMICS Buck Wild (as opposed to Buck Nekkid, former *Wizard* mascot) continues to struggle as Icon's replacement on Earth. Meanwhile, Raquel receives a letter from the real Icon, and we're not talkin' one o' those "You may already be a winner" letters, either. By Dwayne McDuffie, M.D. Bright, and Mike Gustovitch. McDuffie says, "Issue 24 is the introduction of Rocket's baby. And I'm not gonna tell you if it's a boy or a girl, since that's pretty much all the mystery that's left. It's also the first appearance of Oblivion, who's a major Icon villain. [And] the original Icon may have to save the Earth without ever returning here." **$1.75**

✓ INCREDIBLE HULK #428

MARVEL It's Part 2 of "Suffer the Children," where a death trail leads the Hulk into the warm, moist embrace of the Man-Thing. Eeeewww. That's gotta be about as enticing as being embraced by RuPaul. By Peter David, Liam Sharp, and Robin Riggs. David says of the issue, "It's a story with a variety of psychological levels to it. The Hulk, on the surface of it, is battling the Man-Thing, but below the surface, [he] is battling himself. It's all mixed in with this child serial killer, who looks like this very sweet and polite, grandfatherly-type guy called Albert. One of the reasons that I did him that way, is that we always teach our kids that we shouldn't talk to strangers, and we paint in their minds the notion that strangers are these fearsome dark beings. So, in order to kind of underscore that, I made this totally psychotic child killer the friendliest-looking guy you could imagine." **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION ONLY)**

JONAH HEX: RIDERS OF THE WORM AND SUCH #2

VERTIGO/DC At "Wilde's West," a ranch highly supportive of class acts and fine culture, Hex bumps into a sorry bunch of off-key singin' cowboys. If that's not bad enough, there's a whole mess o' giant, man- and cow-eating worms carousing the countryside. What the hell is up with that? Sounds like a Vertigo title to me! By Joe R. Lansdale, Timothy Truman, and Sam Glanzman. **$2.95**

LEGEND OF SUPREME #3

IMAGE The secret is out—Supreme's, that is. And it's one bad secret that he'd sooner forget. (He's really the White Ranger! Shhh—don't tell anybody!) Also, the mighty S enters a duel to the death with the Spider-Clone (ugh)...oh, wait...sorry, that's Supreme's clone he battles. By Keith Giffen, Robert Loren Fleming, Jeff Johnson, and Dan Panosian. **$2.50**

LOBO #15

DC COMICS "Lobo, P.I.," Part 2 (of 5). Sportin' a spiffy trench coat, Lobo starts makin' his mark in the private investigator racket. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to be getting any business. Which is just fine, 'cause some old man wearing a jet-pack smashes into town begging Lobo for help against Big Jake. (Isn't he that guy on TV who does all those bodybuilding routines?) By Alan Grant, Val Semeiks, and John Dell. **$1.95**

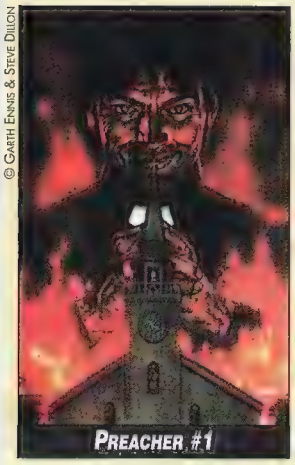
NINJAK #0 AND #00

VALIANT Ninjak's origin is so immense, that it takes two full

© Rob Liefeld
LEGEND OF SUPREME #3

© Voyager
NINJAK #0

MORE PICKS


© Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon
Preacher #1

© DC Comics
The Ray #11

zero issues to tell it! It's great to see a new format with the zero numbering sequence, but I'm still waiting for a #-1 issue to come out! Oh, yeah, and as expected, this two-parter tells all sorts of neato-keen stuff concerning how Colin King became so good at all that ninja and computer stuff (as well as being such a *rico suave* guy), plus a bunch of junk concerning WEBNET, the Weaponeer, and Dr. Silk. By Mark Moretti. **$2.50**

Preacher #1

VERTIGO/DC Preacher Jesse Custer merges with a half-angelic/half-demonic (kinda like those li'l guys that sit on yer shoulders) creature known as Genesis, and learns what Heaven and Hell are really like. Plus, he gains a powerful voice that commands obedience. He then joins with his ex-sweetie Tulip and Cassidy, an Irish Vampire (they only bite bartenders' necks), and the trio ventures out to search for God. Brought your way by the former *Hellblazer* team of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **$2.95**

The Ray #11

DC COMICS Hey, kids, it's a DC book and there's time travel involved. What's the odds of that happenin'? Oh, I'd say maybe 1 to 1. Anyway, the Ray jumps straight from 1940 to the present—whoops, he missed it. Seems like our buddy Ray ended up 30 years in his future, where he has an odd encounter with a woman who turns out to be his sweet babboo. When the Ray's dad comes looking for him, he gets caught by the Lord of the Black Light, Death Mask. (Didja get all that?) By Chris Priest, Howard Porter, and Robert Jones. **$1.95**

Robin #16

DC COMICS The only one who's got the secret to stopping the crime spree being committed by the Spoiler's kidnappers, is the Spoiler herself! But she won't say a thing, unless she gets to pal around with that li'l cutie Robin. Is it me, or does Robin just seem to be getting all the chicks lately? By Chuck Dixon, Tom Grummett, and Ray Kryssing. **$1.50**

Rogue #4 (of 4)

MARVEL It's the final confrontation with Bella Donna and that ol' Assassins Guild, and Rogue must come to terms with the death of someone she cares deeply about. By Howard Mackie, Mike Wieringo, and Terry Austin. **$2.95**

✓ Sandman #69

VERTIGO/DC It's the conclusion to "The Kindly Ones," and the entire Endless all join Youngblood! Hey, relax, just kidding. Scared ya, though, didn't I? This ish reunites Delirium with the wise-crackin' Barnabas, features a surprise in store for Rose Walker following her return from England, and reveals the final fate of the Sandman and the Dreaming. Word on the street is that the Dreaming becomes a neato amusement park with a guy who bites the heads off of bearded chickens! By Neil Gaiman and Marc Hempel. **$1.95**

Shaman's Tears #6

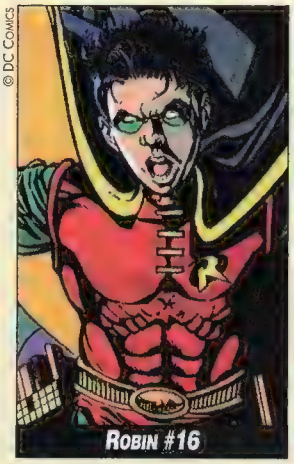
IMAGE It's a Freelance Shaman at his best! Well, actually it's Jon Sable, Freelancer and Joshua Brand (ya know, that main character guy?) in the crossover event of the decade! After being forced back into action, Sable finds himself going up against Brand in a life-threatening duel. Plenty of war paint brought yer way by Mike Grell. **$1.95**

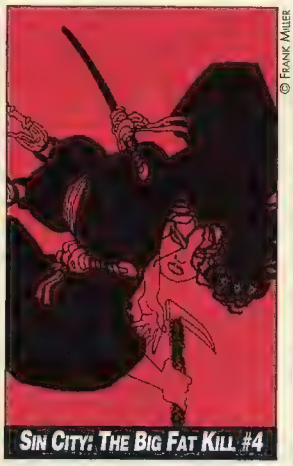
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill #4 (of 5)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE It's the hippest new game in town: bobbing for cops! Dwight's disposed of five dead cops in a tar pit, yet they haven't sunk down below the surface yet. And if the mob finds 'em, it could mean big trouble for little Dwight. And I don't have to tell you what a (don't hit me now) sin it would be to miss this awesome series. By the next president of the United States, Frank Miller. **$2.95**

Spawn #29

IMAGE Fresh off the heels of his stint in Angela's very own mini-series, Spawny finds himself slapped down right in the midst of the God lovin' and fearin' bible belt. What the heck does a bible need with a belt anyway? Well, on his journey home, ol' pizza-an'-shoelace-face catches up with a whole bunch of other loser outcasts and they swap stories and roast marshmallows. By Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. **$1.95**


© DC Comics
Robin #16


© Frank Miller
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill #4

MORE PICKS

The Spectre #28

DC COMICS That evil demon and all-around nasty guy, Azmodus, exacts his revenge on the Spectre by snuffing the lives of the Spectre's closest friends. While ol' Specty is playing that old sorrow game, Azmodus does the most despicable and blasphemous act imaginable: he takes the Spectre's comic book collection...and READS it! The rat bastard! By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake. **$1.95**

Spider-Man Books

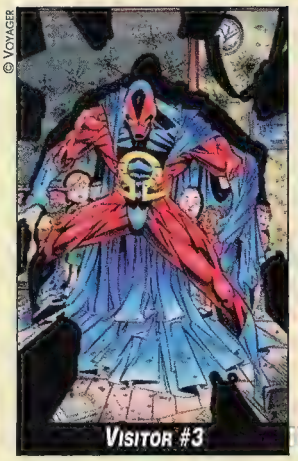
MARVEL Check out *Web of Spider-Man* #123 for the conclusion to "The Price of Truth." While Spider-Man and the Scarlet Ughster tackle the Jackal, Aunt May wakes up from her coma. Too bad. Then swing on by the long-awaited *Amazing Spider-Man* #400, where someone you've known for over 30 years, and whose last name happens to be Parker, bites the big one. (Five bucks says it's the Crusher Hogan clone.) Jump over to *Spider-Man* #57 for "Aftershocks," Part 1 (of 2). Kaine's doing some nasty business, and only the Scarlet Spughster can stop him. (Hmm...wonder where Peter is?) Take a hike to *Spectacular Spider-Man* #223 for the pulse-slowing conclusion to "Aftershocks." The Ughster finds himself in the middle of Kaine and the rest of the gang. This is one issue you sure don't want to miss. ***WEB OF SPIDER-MAN*—$1.50; *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN*—$3.95 (SPECIAL EDITION), $2.95 (REGULAR EDITION); *SPIDER-MAN, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN*—$2.95 (SPECIAL EDITIONS), $2.50 (REGULAR EDITIONS)**

Star Wars: Dark Empire II #3

DARK HORSE "Oh, I believe the shields will be...*quite* operational when your friends arrive." (Shudder.) That Emperor guy gives me the creeps. Anyway, he and Luke have both heard rumors about a Jedi Holocron existing on the planet Ossus. So, now it's a race between Skywalker and a group of Dark Siders (sent by that fiendishly evil and just plain nasty-lookin' Emperor). By Tom Veitch and Cam Kennedy. **$2.95**

Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—Dark Lords of the Sith, Book One #5

DARK HORSE Ulic Qel-Droma (What a sick name!) goes undercover as a fallen Jedi turned smuggler, in order to infiltrate the Krath. Who're the Krath, you ask? Well, let's just say that they're a bunch of nasty beings who are ripping across the cosmos and taking over any inhabitable planets. No sir, you do not want to get in their way. By Tom Veitch and Kevin J. Anderson. **$2.50**



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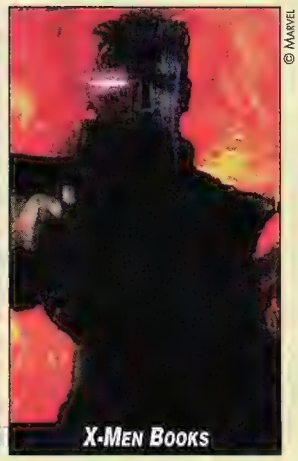
Visitor #3



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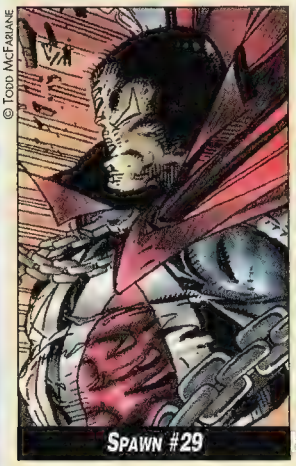
X-Men Books

✓ Superboy #14

DC COMICS "Watery Grave," Part 2 (of 3). Superboy's temporary team-up with Sidearm, Captain Boomerang, Knockout, King Shark, and Deadshot takes a turn for the worse, when one of them is revealed to be a traitor and sends the rest straight into a trap. Well, gee, like I didn't see that coming! What the hell was Superboy thinking? Kesel says of the issue, "This issue involves Superboy and the Suicide Squad, let's face it, on a mission. The whole story is basically about back stabbing, and double crosssing, and Superboy learns the hard way that he can't trust anybody. Superboy's had a pretty easy go of it. People like him; he gets lots of applause and approval, but this is gonna be a real learning experience for him in not a nice way." By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.50**

Superman Books

DC COMICS In *Superman: The Man of Steel* #43, Deathtrap makes things even tougher for Supes and his pal Mister Miracle, when he hits 'em with a whole slew o' lethal traps. Fly over to *Superman* #99, for a political battle of epic proportions. Agent Liberty and the Big "S" crash into each other in Washington, D.C., of all places (hey—they can hang out with Cap's group), where things get pretty heated thanks to the two heroes having some very different styles of justice. For the secret to *The Crying Game*, check out *Adventures of Superman* #522. Well, all right, the only secret revealed this ish is that one of Supes's toughest enemies has discovered his secret identity. Roll over to *Action Comics* #709 to see yet another guest appearance by that loser Warrior, who heads to Metropolis to ask Supes for help in controlling his powers. Yeah, buddy, like Superman doesn't have anything better to do with his time. **$1.50 EACH**



© Todd McFarlane

Spawn #29

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Star Wars: Dark Empire II #3

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MORE PICKS

Vengeance of Vampirella #11
HARRIS Vampirella and Danser Wilde find themselves at an obscure research facility where a fatal experiment in interdimensional relations goes awry. Speaking of which, tell me Skin from Generation X doesn't look like an old E.T.? By Tom Sniegoski and Kurt Van Wormer. **$2.95**

The Visitor #3
VALIANT When the Visitor (is his arch-enemy gonna be the Home?) easily stops a bunch of violent thieves, a friend of the thieves plants some nasty bombs all across the city, threatening to blow up one per day, until his friends are released. Now, that just seems a little rude to me. Why doesn't he just wait for the judicial process like everyone else? His friends should be out in no time at all. By Kevin VanHook and Bernard Chang. **$2.50**

WarBlade: Endangered Species #2
IMAGE Poor, poor WarBlade. First he's attacked by his good buddy Ripclaw (never trusted that weasel, anyway), and then his enemy, Pillar, goes and makes nice. Just what the heck is going on? Well, WarBlade better figure it all out soon, or the Daemonites are going to complete their plans of eradicating all of humankind! Rip-roarin' fun by Steve Seagle (THE Steven Seagle?) and Scott Clark. **$2.50**

WildC.A.T.s #18
IMAGE Void takes a trip down Voodoo's mind to save her from a coma, but while she's doing that mind-meld thing, she learns some shocking secrets. Voodoo is actually the White Ranger! (Uh-oh! Wait'll she meets Supreme!) Plus, Grifter goes gunning for the creeps responsible for Voodoo's condition and the kidnapping of his buddy Maul. By James Robinson and Travis Charest. **$2.50**

X-Men Books
MARVEL Egads, man! The entire X-Men history is mutating right before my eyes! In *The Mutants: The Astonishing X-Men #2*, a group of X-Men head out to save all the mutants they can. Unfortunately, they bump into Holocaust, one of Apocalypse's nastiest goons! When you're done being confused over there, gene-splice over to *The Mutants: The Amazing X-Men #2* and continue following the perplexity! Here, whoever's left of the X-Men take on Apocalypse's minions to allow humankind to continue its evacuation of the country! **$1.95 EACH (DELUXE EDITIONS ONLY)**

good & cheap

by Mike Searle

The Spectre™ & © DC Comics

The Spectre #5
Writer: *John Ostrander*
Artist: *Tom Mandrake*
Current Value: $2

Just lookin' at this book, you know it's gonna be a keeper! With a killer cover by Charles Vess and the sensational creative team of John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake, *Spectre #5* shows why the whole series is one of the best on the racks.

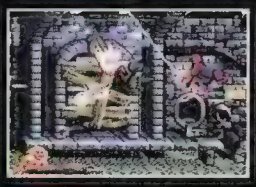
In his latest incarnation, the Spectre is back to his avenging self, hunting for justice among the recently slain and exacting punishment from the guilty. Of course, this isn't always the easiest job on the planet—in fact, the Spectre is forced to descend into Hell (these supernatural guys love doin' that, don't they?) to go after a trio of kidnappers who die in a blazing inferno. His trip this time, however, is not to wreak vengeance on the sinners, but to rescue one of the kidnappers and find out where they've hidden their still-missing victim on Earth. (Well, actually *in* Earth, as the boy's buried alive, and his parents aren't too happy about it.)

The whole fight between Spectre and Shathan, the devilish Lord of Lies, is a classic. If you really want to see what the Spectre is made of, ask a back issue dealer for this one.

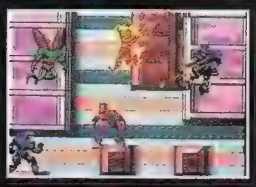
As to why *The Spectre* isn't a Vertigo book is beyond me, but the DC Universe line of titles is certainly in good company. ☆

20 TO 1

THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

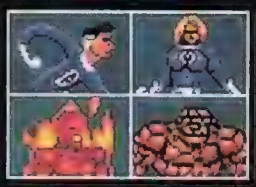


LEAPING LIZARDS! SPIDEY'S CLEANING UP THE SEWER.



FLAME ON! THE HUMAN TORCH™ HEATS UP THE BEETLE™

SPIDEY GETS THE "JUMP KICK" ON VENOM™



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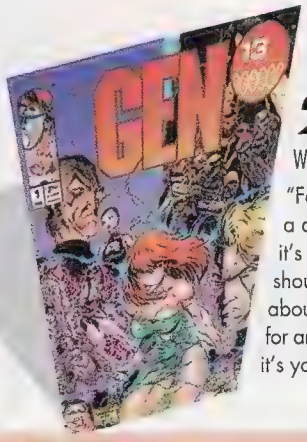
TOP TEN COMICS

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are this month's hottest back issues.**

1. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido ARTIST: Steven Hughes

Well, apparently the Queen of the Dead is for real, as she holds the number one spot for the second month in a row! How does she do it? Simple: mirrors. And lots of 'em. No, no. That's not right. I must've been thinking of that David Copperfield character. Anyway, who'da thunk that a chick named Hope, who enters Hell and challenges the mighty Evil one (No, not Ernie. The other evil guy. Hint: he's got horns.), would become such a smash success? Well, her consistent appearances in all of Evil Ernie's books certainly gave her enough exposure (No pun intended. Yeah, right.), and her new mini-series *Between Heaven & Hell* can only help her popularity. Oh yeah, there's also that whole Bad Girls thing, which probably played some part in her rise to the top. (And hey, look at that. We got through a whole Lady Death section without mentioning her bajoobies.)



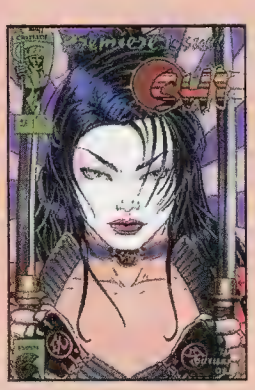
2. GEN13 #1

WRITER: Brandon Choi ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

"Foul! Foul! We demand a recount!" Ho, ho. Sorry, kiddies, but you can stop yer whining, it won't do a damn bit of good. You're just going to have to be content with the number two spot this month. And it's not like *Gen13* hasn't had its moments (try like half a year!) in the sun. Speaking of the sun, you really shouldn't keep your comics outside. I left a copy of *Dakota North* on my neighbor's lawn once, and after about four days, the cover turned a nasty shade of yellow, and got real brittle. And then I forgot about it for another week, and a couple of the neighborhood dogs marked it as their own. So remember, kids, unless it's your brother's or one of your friend's, don't store your comics on the lawn.

3. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Harvey Mercadoocasio



Holding at the number three position, *Shi* remains one of the hottest li'l fillies this side of Winona Ryder. And why is that? Couple of reasons, actually. First off, the art and story. Top notch! Bill, Peter, and Harvey (them swell fellas listed up there in the credits) crank out one of the grooviest li'l titles out there in all of comicdom. Secondly, Ana Ishikawa is one cool babe with some really sick martial arts and sword-wieldin' skills that she uses to battle a whole bunch o' evil guys. Some heavy emphasis on characterization and historical background add a great amount of depth to this series. Throw in a bunch of neato Oriental philosophy and you've got yourself one happenin' book.

4. GEN13 #2

WRITERS: Brandon Choi and Jeff Mariotte
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

Hey, look at that, I'm up to the fourth book on the charts already. Guess I should start talkin' about some of these books, instead of spouting nonsensical, snappy banter, huh? Well, thanks to some pretty spiffy art and yes, even writing, as well as that whole low print run thing, this issue was just snarfed down by fans everywhere. It seems that people just can't get enough of Image's mutant teen book. The original mini-series is now available in paperback, and will only bring more and more readers into this whole new Gen-eration (oooh, what a smoothie I am!) of comics. Also, the release of an ongoing *Gen13* series in March should ensure that these early issues continue to rank high in the polls.

GEN13 ™ & © AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT DBA WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS. LADY DEATH ™ & © BRIAN PULIDO. SHI ™ & © WILLIAM ELLIOTT TUCCI.

5. ZORRO #3

WRITER: Don McGregor
ARTISTS: Mike Mayhew, Andy Mushynsky, and Hilary Barta

™ & © Zorro Productions Inc.

Yessiree Bob, *Zorro* #3 is just about at the halfway mark of our mighty Top Ten list. Only four more slots to go 'til this happenin' book takes over as *número uno*. The first appearance of the whip-crackin', lip-smackin' Lady Rawhide is what makes this baby so *caliente*. That's too bad, 'cause this issue, along with the rest of the *Zorro* series, and a whole slew o' Topps books like *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, and *Mars Attacks*, are just all-around awesome! Outstanding stories and fresh art from Topps's books are unfortunately all too often lost among the mountainous racks of comics available each month. So, do yourself a favor, and go pick up some snazzy Topps books. But make sure you *read* 'em!

6. GENERATION X #1

WRITER: Scott Lobdell
ARTISTS: Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

What we've got here is actually one of your better mutant titles. Sharp, crisp art from Bachalo and Buckingham jumps off the page at you, and that Lobdell guy keeps everything nice and neat as he tells the tale of Marvel's newest and youngest group of mutants, who are headed by Banshee and the White Queen. There's also this new mutant-chick called Penance, who can cut through anything with just the merest touch. Yeah, she'd be a great date. I can just picture it. You're both sittin' there in the movie theater watching a good flick. Then you accidentally reach into the popcorn just as she does, and before the grease completely encompasses your hand, "phhhttt," you're stuck with a bloody tub o' popcorn and you're ready to audition for the lead role in the next Aquaman movie.

7. FLASH #92

™ & © DC Comics

WRITER: Mark Waid
ARTISTS: Mike Wieringo and José Marzan Jr.

The ol' speedster seems to have apparently hit a brick wall. Too bad he can't vibrate through walls yet, or this issue might cruise all the way to number one. Anyway, Flash himself is not the reason this baby's on the charts. This book's so hot right now because it's the first appearance of Bart Allen, AKA Impulse. The little runt is also getting his own series this month, which will only feed the fuel of his fans' fervor. (Try saying that three times fast with a mouth full of Saltines™!) Anyway, what with teenage heroes being the talk of the town these days, as well as *Flash* reaching its centennial mark this month, don't expect this issue to be leaving the roster anytime soon.

8. EVIL ERNIE: REVENGE! #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

™ & © Brian Pulido

Hey, Ernie, looks like you've got a rather large growth coming out of your left shoulder there. You should probably see a doctor about that. You never know what...oh, sorry. Silly me, it's only Lady Death. Those two are just inseparable. But I guess since Lady Death is number one this month, Ernie's gotta be on the charts as well. (Kinda neat how Lady Death started out as a supporting character, but turned out to be more popular than Ernie.) In this, the first issue of his newest mini-series, Ernie does the usual damage as he reanimates a whole slew o' dead folks to further his cause (which is to kill just about everybody on the planet; ambitous li'l tyke). And as always, the Queen of the Dead is there to lend him some help.

9. WONDER WOMAN #88

WRITER: Christopher Priest
ARTIST: John Ross

Oh, man. After three months in a row, I guess I've gotta take ol' Wondie seriously. It seems that everyone wants to see the goddess Circe as a Bad Girl, and this here issue houses her first appearance as such. Well, heh heh, I'm sorry, but I still can't take her seriously. I mean, c'mon, just look at the cover! Supes's hair is actually nicer (and probably longer) than Wonder Woman's. But then again, Superman's hair probably grows at a rate of like 10 feet a day. And how come he doesn't have a five-o'clock shadow? That hair's gotta grow back like almost instantly after he shaves. And speaking of shaving, do you think Wonder Woman shaves her pits? Probably not. Them Amazons are probably as hairy as French chicks. Ughhh.

™ & © DC Comics

10. WOLVERINE #75

WRITER: Larry Hama
ARTIST: Adam Kubert

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Boy, that Wolvie fella is certainly on an emotional roller coaster. Up and down, up and down. One day he's ridin' pretty high on the charts, the next he's slummin' with Devil Dinosaur and Moon Boy. Anyway, with Logan's important roles in recent issues of the X-Men, this particular issue houses some key points. In addition to Wolvie leaving the X-Men, you'll also see one of the most painful scenes ever portrayed in a comic: Wolverine's bone claws cutting through his skin. Yeowwch! And those bone claws are pretty important, too, since we were all originally under the impression that they were, in fact, part of his adamantium skeleton. Hah, we all fell for that continuity thing. ☆

TOP 100

Here's the list for JANUARY... a countdown of the most-ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors Inc.

(CE=Collector's Edition)

1. Mutants: The Amazing X-Men #1 (Marvel)
2. Mutants: The Astonishing X-Men #1 (Marvel)
3. Weapon X #1 (Marvel)
4. Mutants: Generation Next #1 (Marvel)
5. Gambit and the X-Ternals #1 (Marvel)
6. Factor X #1 (Marvel)
7. X-Man #1 (Marvel)
8. Spawn #28 (Image)
9. X-Calibre #1 (Marvel)
10. X-Men Chronicles #1 (Marvel)
11. Angela #2 (Image)
12. WetWorks #5 (Image)
13. Rogue #3 (Marvel)
14. WildC.A.T.s #17 (Image)
15. Bishop #4 (Marvel)
16. Batman #516 (DC)
17. Batman vs. Predator II: Bloodmatch #4 (DC)
18. Pitt #8 (Image)
19. Azrael #2 (DC)
20. Team 7 #4 (Image)
21. Superman #98 (DC)
22. Amazing Spider-Man #399 (Marvel)
23. Adventures of Superman #521 (DC)
24. Superman: The Man of Steel #42 (DC)
25. Action Comics #708 (DC)
26. Star Wars: Dark Empire II #2 (Dark Horse)
27. Detective Comics #683 (DC)
28. Spider-Man #56 (Marvel)
29. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #69 (DC)
30. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #36 (DC)
31. Web of Spider-Man #122 (Marvel)
32. Spectacular Spider-Man #222 (Marvel)
33. X-Men 2099 #18 (Marvel)
34. Robin #15 (DC)
35. Prophet #10 (Image)
36. Star Wars: Tales...D. Lords...Sith #4 (D. Horse)
37. WarBlade: Endangered Species #1 (Image)
38. Backlash #4 (Image)
39. Incredible Hulk #427 (Marvel)
40. Extreme Sacrifice Prelude (Image)
41. Batman: Gotham Nights II #1 (DC)
42. The Power of Shazam! #1 (DC)
43. Extreme Sacrifice Epilogue (Image)
44. Catwoman #19 (DC)
45. Sandman #68 (DC)
46. Green Lantern #60 (DC)
47. Elektra: Root of Evil #1 (Marvel)
48. Shi #6 (Crusade)
49. Lost Universe #2 (Tekno•Comix)
50. Cyberforce Origins Special: Stryker (Image)
51. Fantastic Four #398 CE (Marvel)
52. Grifter Special #1 (Image)
53. Primortals #3 (Tekno•Comix)
54. Mr. Hero—The Newmatic Man #3 (Tekno•Comix)
55. Superboy #13 (DC)
56. The Maxx #13 (Image)
57. Savage Dragon #17 (Image)
58. Venom: Separation Anxiety #4 (Marvel)
59. Vengeance of Vampirella #10 (Harris)
60. Spider-Man 2099 #29 (Marvel)
61. Team Youngblood #17 (Image)
62. Supreme #23 (Image)
63. Brigade #16 (Image)
64. Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers #3 (Hamilton)
65. Sin City: The Big Fat Kill #3 (Dark Horse)
66. Superman: Kal (DC)
67. Beavis & Butt-Head #13 (Marvel)
68. Bloodstrike #18 (Image)
69. Ash #2 (Event)
70. Flash #99 (DC)
71. Cyberforce Universe Sourcebook #2 (Image)
72. Newmen #10 (Image)
73. Evil Ernie: Revenge! #4 (Chaos!)
74. Aquaman #7 (DC)
75. Shaman's Tears #5 (Image)
76. Silver Surfer #102 (Marvel)
77. Avengers #384 (Marvel)
78. Youngblood Strikefile #11 (Image)
79. Captain America #437 (Marvel)
80. Jonah Hex: Riders of the Worm & Such #1 (DC)
81. X-Files #1 (Topps)
82. Force Works #9 (Marvel)
83. Lobo #14 (DC)
84. Punisher #100 CE (Marvel)
85. Iron Man #314 (Marvel)
86. ShadowHawk #16 (Image)
87. Daredevil #338 (Marvel)
88. Aliens: Berserker #1 (Dark Horse)
89. The Books of Magic #11 (DC)
90. Official Star Trek: Voyager Adaptation A (Malibu)
91. Spider-Man: Funeral for an Octopus #1 (Marvel)
92. Chains of Chaos: Link 3 (Harris)
93. Official Star Trek: Voyager Adaptation B (Malibu)
94. Steel #13 (DC)
95. Krusty Comics #1 (Bongo)
96. Godwheel #0 (Malibu)
97. Batman: Mitefall (DC)
98. Thor #484 (Marvel)
99. Badrock and Company #5 (Image)
100. Godwheel #1 (Malibu)

what was hOt 1 yeAr ago...

1. X-Men #30 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #20 (Image)
3. Uncanny X-Men #310 (Marvel)
4. Beavis & Butt-Head #1 (Marvel)
5. X-Factor #100 CE (Marvel)
6. Superman #87 (DC)
7. Wolverine #79 (Marvel)
8. Gambit #4 (Marvel)
9. Cyberforce #3 (Image)
10. Adv. of Superman #510 (DC)

2 yeArs ago...

1. Darker Image #1 (Image)
2. Amazing Spider-Man #375 (Marvel)
3. Spawn #9 (Image)
4. Venom #2 (Marvel)
5. WildStar: Sky Zero #1 (Image)
6. Pitt #3 (Image)
7. Superman #77 (DC)
8. Superman: T. M. of S. #21 (DC)
9. Secret Defenders #1 (Marvel)
10. X-Men #18 (Marvel)

3 yeArs ago...

1. Punisher War Zone #1 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #6 (Marvel)
3. Uncanny X-Men #286 (Marvel)
4. X-Force #8 (Marvel)
5. Spider-Man #20 (Marvel)
6. X-Factor #76 (Marvel)
7. Warlock and the Infinity Watch #2 (Marvel)
8. Wolverine #52 (Marvel)
9. Batman: Gotham Nights #1 (DC)
10. Ghost Rider #23 (Marvel)

InQuest™

DRAWN & QUARTERLY

Due to the overwhelming demand for the special edition of *InQuest*, starting in April we've decided to continue bringing it to you on a quarterly basis.

Starting in April, you'll have a chance to explore the gaming world and check up-to-the-minute prices four times a year. Each issue will be jam-packed with upcoming product news, articles on the people who bring you the games you love to play, and special contests like the premiere contest offering you the chance to win a COMPLETE SET OF *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* - every single card!

Brought to you by the creative team at

WIZARD®

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

Wizard Market WATCH

by **Jon Warren** and **Marc Wilkofsky**

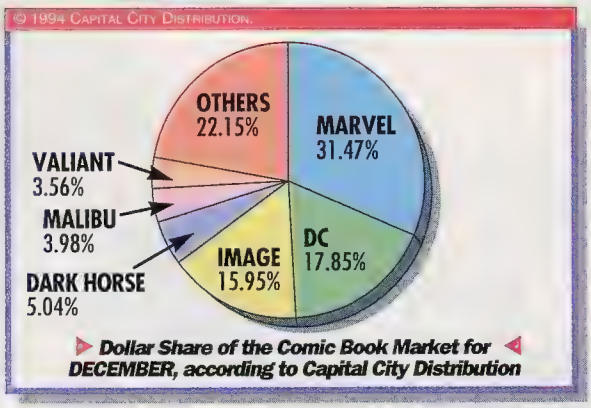
Comicstock '95

One of the things 1994 will be remembered for is musical artist comebacks, including the Eagles, the Stones, and yes, even the Go-Gos. This year, while the music industry is probably ready for more of the same, watchers of the comic industry will constantly wonder which books will pull a *Green Lantern* and achieve massive popularity, as well as if any titles or publishers can come out significantly ahead, with more success than they had ever enjoyed before. This month, we'll give you a few ideas as to where the answers to these questions might lie (including some "comebacks" in the comic market itself), along with a few hints as to what performers we'd like to see hit the stage again.

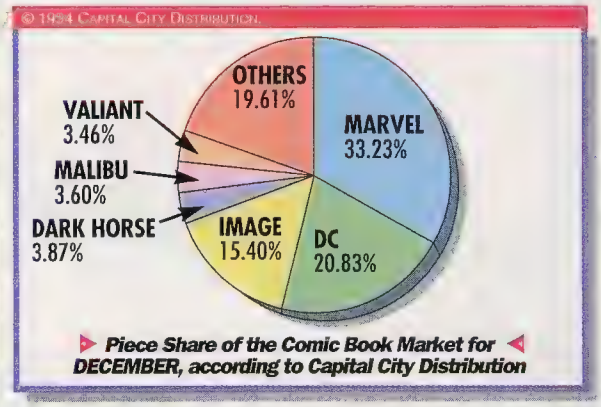
THE HOT RECENT RELEASES (1991-94)

DC's fast-paced **"Terminal Velocity"** storyline in its ***Flash*** title has been pushing along the Speedster's popularity month by harrowing month. ***Flash* #0**, which brought back Wally and unofficially started the storyline in which he will supposedly be replaced, is bustin' a move or two. The tempo of his book has irrevocably hit the No-Stop Zone (with a little help from writer Mark Waid and artist Sal Larroca), and several other comic creators—including a few at DC itself, we're sure—have been left to ponder how to manufacture such a furious seller. While DC readers 'n' collectors are still thirstin' for the recent **"Prodigal"** Bat-issues, with Dick Grayson as Batman (all of which started in the HOT ***Robin* #0**), a new entry of importance has been "born"—the early issues of the latest ***Spectre*** series. This book's seeing some solid interest from a barrage of collectors, many of whom might be too young, sensitive, or easily weirded out by DC's Vertigo books. So, comic fans are apparently no longer asking the avenging spirit, "Who are you?" but "Where have you been?" As for those **Vertigo** titles themselves, Rich Conley of Heroes & Fantasies reports that at his San Antonio, Texas store, "The Vertigo imprint continues to gather more reader interest. New titles like *Vamps*, *Witchcraft*, *Face*, and *Mr. Punch* have been well-received and have sold better than the Vertigo issues released a year ago (*Enigma*, etc.)." This situation is very reflective of today's market, which is more accepting—and expectant—of quality and originality. Unfortunately, DC isn't succeeding on every front—the big S is hitting a not unforeseen slump. "It's time to kill him again," notes Hickory, N.C.'s John F. Moore III, from Comix Etc. DC does have morbid plans, but it's Clark who has to watch his back, not Supes...

Whoever said there wasn't enough room on today's store shelves for another Marvel mutant title? (Well, granted, we were kinda worried. All our apologies, Marvel fans.) Readers are thrillin' to the hip new ***Generation X*** series, featuring some nifty young characters plunked down in the middle of some cool Chris Bachalo art and gnarly Scott Lobdell writing. Watch out for, like, **#1** and the mondo-rare **#2**, collectin' dudes. Meanwhile, everyone knows how megaimportant the "Legion Quest" and "After Xavier" storylines are—especially the core



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for DECEMBER, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for DECEMBER, according to Capital City Distribution

DOLLAR SHARE: While Image had a 3.38 gain, Dark Horse's share increased 0.36 points (and took over the fourth place slot from Malibu). Marvel only gained a hundredth of a point, and the rest of the companies saw drops. Dark Horse and Malibu seem to be fighting for fourth place, and Dark Horse seems to be the prime taker, although Marvel could help Malibu with a strong promotion of its new subcompany.

PIECE SHARE: Marvel's giant 4.56 drop here is probably due to the fact that its heavily-ordered deluxe format X-books have high cover prices, so fans are buying fewer issues. Meanwhile, Image gained 0.3 points, having solicited 16 more books than usual for December, and Dark Horse saw a 0.1 raise, after offering four extra books. All the other companies lost points here.

"LQ" book that everyone's understandably going bonkers about, ***X-Men* #41**, where Xavier faces the final curtain—but people are just slowly finding out about Legion's early appearances in ***New Mutants* #25-#28** and **#44**, which are getting steamier and steamier. Finally, last month, we told you Marvel's recent Spidey books, even with the tremendous onslaught of the Clone Saga, haven't really rocked the market. Well, the four original "Power and Responsibility" books—***Amazing* #394**, ***Spectacular* #217**, ***Spider-Man* #51**, and ***Web* #117**—have seen some market activity, thanks to the fact that these issues really helped America get to know Clone Reilly. Now that it's possible that the Scarlet Spider may be taking over "our" Peter Parker's titles *and* life, the recent Spider-issues are actually watchable, even the ones with only "our" Spidey—these might be his last few appearances. Hey, all we're saying is, give Pete a chance.

In the Image corral, ***Gen*[13]** is still proving itself as a market phenomenon, even though it'll be a few months until we see that highly-anticipated #1 of the ongoing series. The most recent #0 is quickly nearing the double-cover price mark, and the variant #5A certainly isn't just sitting around. Meanwhile, other WildStorm offerings, including ***Backlash***, ***Team 7***, and the ***WetWorks*** series have been hitting the market with some tough winds. Now, if you throw those wacky WS variant covers by Portacio in the jivin' mix, you may formulate an opinion similar to that of Comic Cavalcade retailer William Christensen in Champaign, Ill.: "It's quite obvious that the erosion of the Image brand that everyone was predicting has now come to pass, leaving the various studios to stand on their own merits. WildStorm has emerged as the big winner in the aftermath of this." This seems clear, but Rob Liefeld's Extreme—with its still-hot ***Prophet* #5** and **#6** and ***Supreme* #25**, all of which have a Mr. Platt to thank for their rising market values, and its consistent sellers ***Youngblood*** and ***Team Youngblood***—and Marc Silvestri's Top Cow—whose hot ***Cyberforce*** title and recent ***Codename: Stryke Force* #8**, with the Shi centerfold—are right behind Jim Lee's "Riders on the Storm."

"Hey, you got your hammer in my slime!" "You got your freakin' sludge on my surfboard!" One might hear those cries coming from the Marvel and Malibu offices these days, but one result of Marvel's buying the other big M is almost definite: an increase in quality, in terms of story, production, and promotion. Marvel will absolutely assure that its new "baby," which has only been doing fairly lately, will put out high-quality, totally accessible, and positively collectable products this year—especially since Malibu's standard cover price was just upped to $2.50. For all we know, Malibu might become an even larger market force than it was when its Ultraverse began and wowed everyone back in '93. So, it may soon be time to take a chance on Malibu.

The bad girls continue to take another big piece of the market this month, and their publishers know they've got it, 'cause they're putting as much oomph into their titles as possible. Far-from-standard "standards" Vampirella, Shi, and Lady Death have books burnin' up the charts with a bullet (or a katana), Lady Rawhide's still kickin' live in ***Zorro* (#3**'s a wild back ish seller, folks), and ***Wonder Woman***—as a *title*, not just because of Circe's appearances in the hot **#88** and **#89**—is getting picked up and read by new masses of fans, thanks to Mike Deodato Jr.'s fine art, and the fact that both the old and new WWs can be seen as Bad Girls. (We believe that's what DC wanted, o' course, and Diana's dominatrix, biker-

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

Photo: Al Ortega

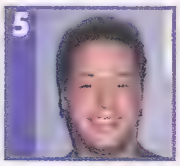
1 **Todd McFarlane**
Spawn

2 **Stephen Platt**
Prophet

Photo: Al Ortega

3 **Frank Miller**
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

4 **Greg Capullo**
Angela



5 **Joe Quesada**
Ash

Photo: J. Schuyler

6 **Andy Kubert**
X-Men

7 **Whilce Portacio**
WetWorks

Photo: Al Ortega

8 **Rob Liefeld**
Youngblood

Photo: J. Schuyler

9 **Adam Kubert**
Wolverine

Photo: Al Ortega

10 **Jeff Smith**
Bone

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

Photo: Al Ortega

1 **Frank Miller**
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

2 **Peter David**
Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099

Photo: Al Ortega

3 **Neil Gaiman**
Sandman, Angela

4 **John Byrne**
Next Men, Babe 2, Torch of Liberty Special

Photo: Al Ortega

5 **Fabian Nicieza**
X-Men, X-Force

Photo: J. Schuyler

6 **Scott Lobdell**
Uncanny X-Men, Generation X

Photo: Al Ortega

7 **Jeff Smith**
Bone

8 **Ron Marz**
Green Lantern, upcoming: X-O Manowar

Photo: J. Schuyler

9 **John Ostrander**
The Spectre, Eternal Warrior

10 **Chris Claremont**
Aliens vs. Predator: D. of S., Cyberforce, upcoming: Sovereign 7

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

Market WATCHERS

Dear Wizard,

I found some comics in a box by my neighbor's garbage, and I would like to know how much they're worth, so here they are:

The Micronauts: They Came from Outer Space #1, #42, #54-#57; *The Micronauts: The New Voyages* #1-#3, #5-#7, #9-#15, #17-#19. Thanks for your help.

Saul Escobar
Miami, FL

Your neighbors sure knew where to stash 'em, Saul. Except for the first ish of the original *Outer Space* series (that's a three-bucker), they're all worth no more than a dollar each. By the way, do your neighbors have a bird or two, and a lack o' newspapers?

Dear Wizard,

About the character Extant in DC's *Zero Hour* series: who or what is he, what's his real name, background, etc.? Thanks!

Jim Sharpe
Chateauguay, Quebec, Canada

Well, *somebody* had to ask about him! To give you a brief, but solid, rundown, Extant was once Hank Hall, also known as the aggressive Hawk—part of the original Hawk & Dove team (the duo's first app was in *Showcase* [vol. 1] #75). After Hank's partner was brutally killed in *Crisis*, he took up with a new female Dove, but that's when things went awry. The maniacal Monarch traveled back in time to kill Dove and confront Hawk, and when the seething Mr. Hall killed Monarch, it was revealed, in what was arguably DC's worst unexplained paradox, that they were they same person! After the former Teen Titan became the world-crushing Monarch (he just put on Monarch's armor—don't ask where Monarch himself first came from), he amassed more power thanks to Hal Jordan/Parallax, and turned into the time-consuming villain called Extant. At the end of *Zero Hour*, the guy was apparently blasted to bits in one of those time destruction things, but anyone can come back from that jazz. Thanks for the question, Jim!

Dear Wizard,

After reading *Wizard* for almost a year, I've noticed most of the issues of Extreme titles like *Brigade*, *Bloodstrike*, *Team Youngblood*, and *Supreme*, have not increased beyond their cover price. Should I burn my own collection of these lackluster issues?

Tannaka Boler
St. Louis, MO

I'm inclined to say no, Tannaka, mainly 'cause I hate to see any comic reduced to ashes—even *Secret Defenders*. Also, it's dangerous, even if you do know exactly what you're doing. Maybe you should wait until these titles fall under the "New Order"—give them a shot. Then recycle the whole lot of 'em. You know, help out your environment and all that good stuff.

Dear Wizard,

I recently began collecting comic books, and my aunt gave me a copy of Marvel's *Star Brand* #1. I was wondering if you could tell me how much this book's worth.

Traci Haley
Prineville, OR

Well, I'll tell you, Traci, if your aunt had to give you one of those babe look is starting to grow on us. Well, one of us at least.)

MODERN AGE SELLERS (1970-90)

Star Wars never really left the back issue market, people—but it's back in a big way! While practically every issue of the Marvel run is being scooped up by *SW* groupies, **#1** and final issue **#107**—with art by Whilce Portacio—are by far the hottest tickets. Retailers are telling us that collectors are coming in and buying up every issue they have in stock. Why? Along with the regular Jedi fever, excitement over the new trio of films to be released later this decade is stemming this force of fans. The Marvel run itself is about a decade old, so these books just ain't as easy to find as they used to be.

DC still has its ***Sandman*** series to thank for bringing back issue buyers of all types and mentalities into stores. Now that the series is nearing its "unkindly" end, people want as much of this guy's story as they can get.

As for other hot MA books, ***Amazing Spider-Man* #149-#151** are still up there, and will continue to be, especially when *Amazing* #400 hits the streets with its massive semi-climax to the Clone story. Gold Key *Star Trek* comics are also doing well right now, as a "bonus" offset of the Trekmania caused by the *Generations* flick.

POPULAR SILVER AGE BOOKS (1955-70)

Everyone who rushed out and bought boxes of ***Richie Rich*** comics hoping to cash in on the success of the movie is waiting to see if they've won the Comic Collector Lotto. Waitaminnit, you're saying—RICHIE RICH?!? As in Irona the Robot-Maid and Cadbury the Butler? Hey, it's been an overlooked book for many years (for many good reasons, also), and there's nothing like a big-screen movie to get even non-collectors panting. So far, though, there's nothing doing in Richland. We'll keep you posted.

As an intriguing form of comebacks for comic book figures, the revivals of Golden Age Marvel characters into the 1960s have been a topic of interest to Marvel collectors. Much has been written about the revival of the DC Golden Age characters in ***Showcase*** and ***Brave and the Bold***, but Marvel's revivals of Human Torch, Captain America, and Sub-Mariner have been pretty much overlooked. Until now. Think about it: the revival of the Flash character in *Showcase* is worth upwards of $18,000, but Marvel's revival in ***Avengers* #4** of Captain America, the company's most successful superhero of the forties, is worth only a fraction of that amount at about $1,100. Of course, rarity is a factor, but should this large of a price difference exist?

Speaking of Marvel revivals, Sub-Mariner's first re-emergence since the olden golden days has been sparkin' like Sue Storm's eyes when she sees him. ***Fantastic Four* #4** is the book of which we're speaking. If you're into classic Silver Age books (and you've got the dough), you can't get much better than this gem—it's a fine choice for your collectin' heart.

***Fantastic Four* #5** is another *FF* that's been smokin' hot lately. Reports indicate that this first-ever appearance of the evil Dr. Doom is on every big-time collector's wish list. Problem is, it's too hard to find!

Another best-selling Marvel key is ***Journey into Mystery* #83**, the first appearance and origin of Thor, which gets our vote for the most undervalued Marvel key. Finding one of these jewels might not be as tough as finding an ***Incredible Hulk* #1**, but it's not easy, either. There's a lot of demand among collectors for this issue, much more demand than the available supply can fill—you know what that means!

Over at the DC end of the market we have ***Showcase* #22**, the first appearance and origin of the Silver Age Green Lantern, as one more example of too much demand chasing too little supply.

Possibly the most overlooked and undervalued of the *Showcase* series is **#55**, featuring Dr. Fate, Hourman, and the first solo story of the Golden Age Green Lantern. It currently lists in the price guide for only $175, but we've heard reports of high grade copies selling for well above that amount, so price adjustments are certain to occur in the near future.

Other books at the top of collectors' lists include ***Brave and the Bold* #28**, the introduction of the Justice League of America, currently selling in the $4,000 range in top condition but hard to find at any price; ***Brave and the Bold* #34**, the first Silver Age Hawkman, moving in the $1,500 range; ***Aquaman* #1**, another book that looks cheap when you consider the interesting fact that it hit the stands a year before books like *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 and *Avengers* #1, yet brings only $400 in top condition; ***Batman* #100** is a perennial favorite among DC collectors, and it's tough to find, as are all DCs from that early '50s time period; and last but not least, ***Superman* #100**, the other anniversary issue that many collectors use as the jumpin' on point for their collections of original Superman comics.

THE GOLDEN AGE MARKET (1938-54)

Of course, no Market Watch would be complete without a look at the hit-filled Golden Age segment. What's hot? ***Captain America***—any issue, any grade. Of course, the Big Daddy is issue **#1**, but other notable issues include **#3**, featuring Stan Lee's first Marvel work; **#59**, featuring the retelling of Cap's origin story; and #s **74** and **75**, the two issues which tried to capitalize on the booming sales of horror comics at the time by temporarily changing the title to *Captain America Weird Tales* (similar to the way Charlton publications tried to cash in on the science fiction craze of the early fifties with its weird *Space Western* series, featuring a cowboy hero riding through space on horseback—gad!). It seems these companies had a few too many birds flying around their yard, so to speak.

Speaking of space, we've run out. Until next month, Market Watchers—keep reachin' for those Near Mint stars! ☆

Marc Wilkofsky thinks Belinda Carlisle is incredibly hot, especially in her "I Get Weak" video. Jon Warren is happily married.

hopeless New Universe books, at least she picked one of the only two "swallowable" ones (the other being *D.P. 7*). It's only worth a dollar, but I suggest you use it as a starting point for a complete, 19-issue *SB* collection! You'll get the whole story—including some goodies by John Byrne—for no more than 20 bucks. After that, start collecting some real titles that more than 50 people actually bought.

Dear Market Watchers,

I've been collecting comics and cards for about a year and a half. A few issues back, in this column, someone asked about the value of a *Maxx* #1/2. It has since appeared in the price listings. How about some other price listing for 1/2 issues, like *Gen*^{13} #1/2—in fact, all the #1/2 issues? It would be helpful to collectors; it keeps people from ripping them off. If there's no price listing for a #1/2, it's a "name your price" situation. Thanks for listening, and I hope to see those #1/2s listed soon.

Kim A. Duckett II
Ridgecrest, CA

Slowly but surely, Kim...just be patient. As I explained a bit too briefly when answering Patrick Keck's letter in issue #34, we're honestly a bit concerned about printing values for books we co-published—could you see DC or Marvel featuring prices for their own specials in their books? So, we always take the time to research each #1/2 through our huge retailer network, compiling the most accurate value possible for each of these agreeably important issues. Doing anything else would be like casting a misogynistic movie without Michael Douglas—unheard of. The *Gen*^{13} edition's been in there for a while now, and the others will soon be joining it.

Dear Wizard,

A friend offered to trade me my *Gen*^{13} #2 for his *Prophet* #4A (with the Stephen Platt cover). What should I do?

Mike Edelman
Garner, NC

That's a toughie, Mike, but here's help: if you're looking for a fun, engaging story, keep your *Gen*^{13} book. If you're looking for an issue that will at least maintain a fairly level, strong market value (if not an increasing one), keep your book. If you're a fan of Hot Ticket artists but not of churning regret, you should still keep your book. Hope that steers you the right way—especially the regret aspect. (Which I felt as a fankid, after giving a friend a Near Mint *New Teen Titans* #1 for a nothing-to-it reprint issue of *MARVEL TALES*!! But I'm not bitter.)

Dear Marc,

First, I realized that Darth Vader and Elmer Fudd were in your Intro to the Price Guide. Then I looked back and found two musicians: Chris Isaak and Eddie Vedder. To quote Jerry Seinfeld, "What, is, the deal?"

Chris Bennett
Grantsville, WV

You know, Isaak and Vedder didn't mind, so why should you? Actually, they were part of our long-running mini-stab at humor; we listed everyone from DJs (Howard Stern) to VJs (Martha Quinn) in the Intro for a few months to see if people would notice. People did; whether they actually got the joke is a different story. Now we just have a lonely Vader and rapper KRS-One (co-writer of Marvel's *Break the Chain*). But we've still got our own stars, like HCh and JRb (shameless plugs for this issue's interviews), and the roommates from heck who fought to get in there, artists JCz and YLa! If you readers want to see some "real" stars again, though, drop us a line!

On that note, it's so long till next month time! So, till next month, so long, homewatchers! Thanks for a column full of flavah!

—Marc Wilkofsky
Dope and Deffer

Yo, Market Watchers! Write those letters to:

MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

To help connect you with the biggest and best comic book shows and conventions in your area, *Wizard* is still printing all the stuff we used to print in this department. But we've added extra space so you can find out in advance about admission discounts, creator appearances, and other superneat stuff!

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

ALABAMA

FEBRUARY 4, HUNTSVILLE
Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Jaycee Community Building, Old Airport Rd., 35 tables @ $30 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Contact: Linda or Clay Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

ARIZONA

FEBRUARY 3-5, PHOENIX
Arizona Comic Con I, 7611 West Thomas Rd., Westridge Mall, 80 tables @ $125 each, free admission, Friday 10am-9pm, Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 11am-6pm. Guests: Stan Lee and Darick Robertson (New Warriors). Contact: Bob Hughes @ 602-973-1369.

CALIFORNIA

TUESDAYS, FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY, WHITTIER
Cardtown USA, 12327 Whittier Blvd. at the corner of Penn St., 2 miles east of the 605 Freeway, free admission, Tuesdays & Fridays 5pm-9:30pm, Saturdays & Sundays 11am-6pm. Special members drawing every show, always free parking, occasional guest appearances. Contact: Roger Sparling @ 310-693-1978.

FEBRUARY 24-26, SAN FRANCISCO
Super Comic & Collectibles Expo, Cow Palace, Geneva Avenue & Santos, 200 tables (Call for table cost), admission: $5/day, $12/3-day pass, children under 6 free, Friday 12 noon-8pm, Saturday & Sunday 10am-6pm. Guests: Whilce Portacio (WetWorks) & other Image creators (Homage & Extreme Studios) will appear. Also, Al Simmons (AKA Spawn), the Spawn Monsters, and the Spawnmobile. Top sports celebrities will be signing. SUPER SLAM POGS CONTEST; *Magic: The Gathering* Tournament. Win original Image artwork! Featuring Golden, Silver, and Modern Age books, toys, figures, sportscards, games, *Star Trek* memorabilia, *Magic* cards, and POGs. Free promos daily. Contact: Bill Lee @ 415-333-8100.

DELAWARE

FEBRUARY 26, NEWARK
Small Wonder! Con, Best Western, Newark, I-95 Exit 3 (Dover), next to University Plaza, 30-plus tables @ $50 each ($40 in advance), $3 admission, 10:30am-4:30pm. Items include: comics, sports & non-sports cards, videos, and toys. Guest: to be announced; call 1-800-803-5909 for the latest information. For more information, contact: Joe Hummel @ 302-456-3055.

FLORIDA

MARCH 25-26, Orlando
Florida Comic Book Mega-Con, Orlando Expo Center, 500 W. Livingston, free admission, Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 10am-6pm. SEE DISPLAY AD IN THIS ISSUE FOR MORE INFORMATION. Contact: Skyline Promotions @ 407-426-7745.

GEORGIA

FEBRUARY 3-5, 10-12, 17-19, & 24-26, DULUTH/ATLANTA
PT Shows Inc., Outlets Limited Mall @ I-85 & Pleasant Hill Rd., 45 tables @ $85 each or 2 for $150, free admission, Friday 4-9pm, Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 12-6pm. Contact: David Bradford or Charles Dozetos @ (local) 404-923-5557 or 800-251-5150.

KENTUCKY

FEBRUARY 11, LOUISVILLE
Comics, Cards, & Music Collector's Show, Breckinridge Inn, Breckinridge Lane (I-264, Exit 18A), 40 tables @ $30 each or 2 for $50, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Contact: Wally Ross @ 502-228-9707.

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 12, WOBURN
Monthly Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Ramada Hotel, Exit 35 off of Rt. 128, 35 tables @ $50 each or 2 for $75, $2 adult admission, $1 for young adults, children under 6 free, 11am-4pm. Up to $200 in credit raffles, low prices, *Magic* cards, statues, toys, original art, and many more collectibles on hand. Free newsletter and promotional gifts to attendees. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

FEBRUARY 19, NATICK
Monthly Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn Crown Plaza, Rt. 9E off of Rt. 30, 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 adult admission, $1 for young adults, children under 6 free, 11am-4pm. Up to $200 in credit raffles, low prices, *Magic* cards, statues, toys, original art, and many more collectibles on hand. Free newsletter and promotional gifts to attendees. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

FEBRUARY 26, ROCKLAND
NEW Monthly Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Ramada Inn, Exit 14 (Rt. 228) off of Rt. 3, 35 tables @ $50 each or 2 for $75, $2 adult admission, $1 for young adults, children under 6 free, 11am-4pm. Up to $200 in credit raffles, low prices, *Magic* cards, statues, toys, original art, and many more collectibles on hand. Free newsletter and promotional gifts to attendees. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

FEBRUARY 5, NASHUA
NEW Monthly Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn, Exit 4 off of Rt. 3 (at the bottom of ramp, turn left to the Hotel), 35 tables @ $50 each or 2 for $75, $2 adult admission, $1 for young adults, children under 6 free, 11am-4pm. Up to $200 in credit raffles, low prices, *Magic* cards, statues, toys, original art, and many more collectibles on hand. Free newsletter and promotional gifts to attendees. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 4, WOODBRIDGE
Comic Book Marketplace, The Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rt. 1 South, across from the Woodbridge Mall, 40 tables @ $55 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Rudy Nebres (*The Punisher, Conan*) and Kevin Kobasic (*Rai, Deathlok*). Also, $100 in show cash door prizes. Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

FEBRUARY 5, BORDENTOWN
Comic Book Marketplace, Days Inn Hotel, Rt. 206N off Exit 7 off the N.J. Turnpike, 30 tables @ $55 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Michael Avon Oeming (*Judge Dredd, Deathstroke*), Neil Vokes & Rich Rankin (*Jurassic Park Adventures*). Also, $100 in show cash door prizes. Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

FEBRUARY 19, WAYNE
Wayne Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn, Rt. 46 East Service Road (1/2 mile east of Willowbrook Mall), 30 tables @ $50 each prepaid, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Door prizes, surprise guests, old-fashioned no minimum bid auction, non-sports cards for sale also, $2 merchandise credit with paid admission and if you show us your *Wizard*! Contact: B. Brzezinska at Pug Productions @ 201-783-0608.

NEW YORK

MARCH 12, BUFFALO
The Comic Book Show, 1340 Millersport Highway, take Rt. 90 to Exit 50, Rt. 290 to Exit 5B, 35 eight-foot dealer tables (all tables sold out), $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Rick Arthur (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*), John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures*), Ken Lashley (*Excalibur*), and Eddy Newell (*Black Lightning*). Contact: Phil Conley for more information @ 716-282-1236.

MARCH 18, KINGSTON
Mid-Hudson Valley Comic Con '95, State Armory, Manor Avenue, 65 eight-foot tables @ $65 each, $5 admission, 10am-8pm. Charity auction of original art and limited editions from 2-4pm for Neal Pozner Memorial to benefit AIDS research. Door prizes and art contest. Guests: Greg Capullo (*Spawn, Violator, Angela*), Paul Anderson (Ultraverse, *The Strangers*), Terry Austin (*X-Men, Rogue*), Charles Barnett (*Elfquest*), Dave Cockrum (*Futurians, X-Men*), Kevin Conrad (*X-Force*), Todd Dezago (*Web of Spider-Man*), Mike Dubisch (*Flesh Crawlers*),

Michael Jan Friedman (*Star Trek: TNG*), John Hebert (*Punisher War Journal*), Fred Hembeck (satirist), Jeff Jones (*Age of Innocence*), Elaine Lee (*Vamps, Prince Valiant*), Ron Marz (*Green Lantern, Silver Surfer, X-O Manowar*), Jon J. Muth (*Moonshadow, M*), Rachel Pollack (*Doom Patrol, New Gods*), Bart Sears (*Brute & Babe, X-O Manowar*), Andy Smith (*Quasar, X-O Manowar*), Joe Staton (*E-Man, Batman*), Herb Trimpe (*Hulk, FF Unlimited*), Tom Vincent (*Thanos Quest, Silver Surfer*), and others to be announced. Call (914) 247-0637 for more information.

OHIO

MARCH 12, YOUNGSTOWN

Youngstown-Warren Comic Con, Holiday Inn-Metroplex, I-80 & Rt. 193, 32 eight-foot tables @ $45 each in advance, $2 admission, free admission for children 6 and under, 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

MARCH 19, HUDSON

Comic Book & Non-Sports Card Show, Hudson Holiday Inn, Route 8 @ Ohio Turnpike, Exit 12, 40 tables @ $40 each, $2 admission (children under 10 free), 10am-4pm. Contact: Steve Weimer @ 216-650-4039.

PENNSYLVANIA

FEBRUARY 11, LANGHORNE

Comics & Cards, Sheraton Books County, 400 Oxford Valley Road, 55 tables @ $40 each, $1 admission, 9am-3pm. Contact Greg Petrino @ 215-968-8577.

TENNESSEE

FEBRUARY 18, CHATTANOOGA

Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Days Inn, I-75 East Ridge Exit, 35 tables @ $45 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Contact: Linda or Clay Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

FEBRUARY 25, KNOXVILLE

Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Ramada Inn, Cedar Bluff Rd., 25 tables @ $50 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Contact: Linda or Clay Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

TEXAS

FEBRUARY 4, HOUSTON

Card, Comic, and Toy Convention, Holiday Inn Hobby Airport, 9100 Gulf Freeway, I-45 South Exit College Airport, 45 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 9am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes. Free pack of Marvel comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 5, SAN ANTONIO

Card, Comic, and Toy Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 7750 Briaridge, Loop 410W and 10W behind Malibu, 40 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 11, HOUSTON

Card, Comic, and Toy Show, Hilton Hotel Southwest, 6780 Southwest Freeway, Exit Hillcroft, 30 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 9am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes. Free pack of Marvel cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 12, AUSTIN

Card, Comic, and Toy Show, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North IH35, 35 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 12, BEAUMONT

Comic & Card Show, Holiday Inn, Beaumont Plaza, I-10W at Walden Road, 30 tables @ $30 each, $1 admission, 10am-4pm. We will have door prizes and *Magic: The Gathering* cards! Contact: Richard Lim @ 713-449-8511.

FEBRUARY 12, HOUSTON

Comic Carnival '95, Holiday Inn Hobby Airport, 9100 Gulf Freeway, I-45 South Exit College Airport, 50 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10:30am-5pm. Door prizes; call the 24-hour hotline for guest info @ 713-335-SHOW (7469).

FEBRUARY 18-19, HOUSTON

Card, Comic, and Toy Show, Holiday Inn, I-10 and Silber (7611 Katy Frwy, I-10W, Exit Silber), 45 tables @ $125 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm (both days). Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of Marvel cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 26, AUSTIN

Card, Comic, and Toy Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North IH35, 35 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 26, HOUSTON

Card, Comic, and Toy Convention, Holiday Inn Park 10 West (14703 Park Row, Katy Frwy, I-10W at Hwy. 6), 45 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of Marvel cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

FEBRUARY 26, SAN ANTONIO

Comic & Card Show, Embassy Suites Hotel, 7750 Briaridge, 40 tables @ $40 each, $1 admission, 10am-4pm. We will have door prizes and *Magic: The Gathering* cards! Contact: Richard Lim @ 713-449-8511. ☆

If you'd like to use *Wizard*'s magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

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Wizard Bullpen

¡FELIZ NAVIDAD!

Never let it be said that the *Wizard* bunch can't party. On December 22, Wizard Press held its second annual Holiday Party, where fun, frolic, and food was had by all.

Highlights of the evening started with the rug-cutters of our merry staff. At the forefront was *Wizard* Design Assistant Arlene So, along with *Sportslook* News Editor Jim McLauchlin (who, unfortunately for Arlene, has absolutely no sense of rhythm), and Director of Circulation and Distribution Paul Rolnick (who made moves that no mere human could accomplish). Caught in the middle of all this was poor Research Assistant Phil Colligan, who was not only dragged onto a runaway conga line and karaoke number, but was also taught to "drink like a real man." (Well, we tried, but his mom told him not to pound any down, so he didn't. Wuss.)

After the dance floor calmed down, the karaoke tunes were cranked out, yet no one would bite. Breaking the long silence, however, were Jim McLauchlin and *Wizard* Editor Brian Cunningham singing (and fumbling and kinda making it up as they went along) Fats Domino's "Kansas City." Not to be one-upped, *Wizard* staffers Andrew Kardon, Bob Marshall, David Prager, Mike Fasolo, Phil Colligan, and Brian C. (who, incidentally, regrets every moment of his follow-up at the mike) chimed out a Grammy-losing performance of "Feelings," followed by an impromptu (and completely flubbed) rendition of the theme to the 1960s *Spider-Man* cartoon. "Feelings" was dedicated to *Wizard* Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky—who couldn't attend the bash due to his bout with the dreaded chickenpox (he's a wuss, too)—while the Spidey theme was dedicated to no one in particular.

And as the evening wound down, the glassy-eyed and slow-moving Wizard Press staffers shuffled off to their homes in hopes that some fat guy would drop stuff down their chimneys. Saps.

GOIN' TO THE CHAPEL OF LOVE...

Not one, but *two* Wizard Press staffers have announced that they're gettin' hitched! Promotions Assistant Tracey Altro got engaged to her boyfriend of six (count 'em—SIX) years, Chris Burti, on December 20. Wizard Press Design Assistant Jonathan Marsland announced at our Holiday Party that he, too, got engaged to his leading lady of eight (count 'em—EIGHT) years, Dyahan Felix. Tracey's expected to exchange vows in the fall of '96, while Jon's date is currently undecided. Congratulations to both of 'em!

WHO ARE YOU?

Andrew Kardon
Copy Editor, *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What is it you do?
I proofread everything but the comic book price guide, I help write a bunch of stuff (like More Picks, the various Top Tens, etc.), and whatever else that rat-bastard McCallum throws at me.

Favorite section in *Wizard*?
That'd have to be Magic Words or Good & Cheap.

One thing you like most about working at *Wizard*?
Talking to comic creators, and seeing how many times I can get my manly dog Muffin (Yes, he's a he!) in the magazine (see *Wizard* #42, page 41).

Last good movie you saw?
Highlander (on video).

Last good book you read?
Q-Squared, by Peter David. Easily the most confusing—yet satisfying—book I've read in a long time.

What would your biography be called?
Cap, Twisted Sister, and Me: An Odyssey of Epic Proportions

Favorite TV show?
Toss-up between *The Prisoner* and *The Simpsons*. One's an insanely hysterical and witty program; the other's a cartoon.

Who would you want to star with in a movie?
Heather Locklear and Gates McFadden—no doubt about it!

Favorite comic right now?
I'd like to say that it's *Captain America*, but, well, it's not. Probably *Sin City* or *Flash*.

What superpower would you want, and why?
The ability to turn all red traffic lights green, for reasons that are self-explanatory.

Favorite band?
Currently Queensrÿche, but Twisted Sister is still the greatest band of all time. Go, Dee!

What were some nicknames you've had?
Android, Androol, Drew, and if you even think about calling me Andy, I'll rip your arm off and beat you over the head with the bloody stump.

How has working at *Wizard* changed you?
I've got a lot more comics now.

Lifetime goal?
To write *Captain America*.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PRAGER

Top 10 most noticeable changes in the Ultraverse since Marvel bought Malibu:

10. X-Mantra.
9. *UltraForce* renamed *UltraForce Works*.
8. Stan Lee now runs around saying, "I'm in the Prime of my life."
7. Thor in *Godwheel*. (No one notices.)
6. Prime's evil clone worked smoothly into continuity.
5. Two words: Ultraverse Deluxe.
4. Sludge forgotten as quickly as Man-Thing.
3. All the good artists and writers left.
2. Prime's skin: a symbiote from Beyonder's world.
1. All Ultraverse movies now destined to bite.

INQUEST

Wizard Press presents a special publication, *InQuest*, focusing on the hot new market of collectible trading card games. This special sports an enchanting original cover by renowned artist **Anson Maddocks**, along with your chance to win autographed pieces. You'll also find in-depth interviews with *Magic: The Gathering* creator **Richard Garfield**, as well as other top designers. Other features include a look ahead at upcoming card sets: fantasy, sport, and entertainment; and an extensive checklist and price guide to show how much your cards are worth. Each issue includes its very own **Wizard Press trading card**. Join the quest this January! **$2.50**

COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK #16

Picture yourself in a padded room with only three other people. There's basketball player **Grant Hill** of the Detroit Pistons, suffering from the flu, a hot towel draped over his head. There's race car driver **Rusty Wallace**, talking about the 1995 Winston Cup and his favorite foe Dale Earnhardt. And there's Cindy Crawford, wearing one of her sexy Victoria's Secret numbers. Who would you choose to hang out with? Yeah, us too, but since *Collector's Sportslook* is a sports card magazine, we went with Grant and Rusty. Our decision has made the March 1995 issue our best ever. You'll find three awesome contests, one exclusive card offer, and more info and price guides than every other card mag combined! **$3.95**

WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS VOLUME ONE, FORTY-THREE (43), MARCH 1995
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M A D E I N T H E U . S . A .

E.G.O.*

Confessions of a Comic Book Junkie

by Todd McFarlane

I thought for this month's column, rather than spouting off about something going on in the industry or explaining how to be an inker, I'd give some insight into how I started collecting comic books. I've said in many interviews that I began collecting comics in the 1970s, but I never went into much detail. Let me tell you, for the first time, how it began.

I was 17, going to high school at the time, in early 1978. I'd been a big baseball card collector at that point, long before the big craze that hit years later, and I'd also enjoyed drawing—I had doodles along the side of all my school papers. For some reason, I was walking down a road and I had some change in my pocket; I decided for the first time in about 12 years to go out and purchase a comic book with cold hard cash. I went to the local store where I bought ice cream bars to bring to school every day, and I bought five comics: a *Hulk* reprint, a *Fantastic Four* reprint, *Dr. Strange* #23, *Amazing Spider-Man* #167, and *Black Panther* #3 by Jack Kirby. (I thought, "I'm getting in on something hot from the ground floor.")

I took them home and scanned through 'em, and was a little disappointed that two of them were reprints; I could tell right off the bat that they had an older style and weren't quite as cool as the other three. I ended up going back to the same store and buying more comics with some money I had stashed away. I picked up a *Thor*, a *Captain America*, an *Avengers*, *Incredible Hulk*, *Fantastic Four*—y'know, Marvel's prominent characters. I was now a classic Marvel Zombie. Of course, I was attracted by the art. (One of the art teams that I must point out as being brilliant is from *Hulk* #210-#230, where Sal Buscema penciled and Ernie Chan inked. Ernie gave Sal's pencils a depth, and the Hulk looked powerful.)

After a while, I had a couple of extra bucks in my pockets and expanded my Marvel collecting. I had read all of the superhero comics, and I was desperate for more comics, so I ended up buying comics I never thought I'd buy: *Master of Kung-Fu*, *Howard the Duck*, *Iron Fist*, and *Conan the Barbarian*. Those kinds of comics gave me an appreciation of genres beyond superheroes. The artwork on all of those books was among the best out there. There was also *Tomb of Dracula*, which became the book that was head and shoulders above any other comic, in terms of mood and plot set-up; I was so impressed with what Gene Colan and Tom Palmer did with the book's artwork.

When I had exhausted all my Marvel books, and yet still hungered for more, I decided to try a DC Comics title. Luckily, the first book I picked up was an issue of *Detective Comics* with artwork by Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin, which was one of the more definitive looks for Batman at that time. Then I followed Marshall's brilliant artwork on DC's *Mr. Miracle*, which was shortly taken over by the amazing Michael Golden. At that point, I became a collecting psycho and collected EVERYTHING. If it existed, I collected it.

When the new companies of the early '80s came along (like Pacific Comics and First Comics), I had gone to college, and in order to pay for my tuition I worked in a comic store. If there were 800 comics out that month, I owned 800 books. I knew everything about every character, every creative person (heck, I could even tell you who lettered what!), and all the continuity. After about a good five years of doing that and going through the Frank Miller era, the George Pérez era, the Keith Giffen era, the Art Adams era—all the high points from '78 to '83—I had got to the point where collecting became overload. I mean, I collected DC's *G.I. Combat* and *House of Mystery*! So, I cut back on the books that I bought just to keep my collection up to speed. I'm sure every collector at some point had to make a decision like that.

Unfortunately, what really put a halt to my comic collecting was my eventual breaking into the business as an artist in 1984. Once you put in eight or 10 hours of drawing a comic, the last thing you want to do is go to a comic shop and buy some comics to look at, at least for me.

So, there's my comic book collecting origin, so to speak. My enthusiasm for comics continues today because of the first couple of comics I had picked up. I hope it's true that fans buying the newest issue of *Uncanny X-Men*, *WildC.A.T.s*, or *Superman* will someday sit back and reflect fondly on the first 10 comics they bought. After all, generation through generation, it's that kind of fondness that ensures the future of comics. ☆

Todd McFarlane is a co-founder of Image Comics, and is the writer and artist of Spawn.

Any industry professional who wishes to respond to the information or opinions stated here should write to: E.G.O., 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff, or Image Comics.

WIZARD Profile

Here's looking at...JOHN BOLTON

by Ruth Morrison

John Bolton wants to change the way you look at...everything.

"What I like to do," says the versatile painter and sculptor, "is to work from a realistic base, and then change it, turn it upside down, to evoke a shocking response, or to make someone think differently about what they are looking at."

Most recently, he has done covers for Topps Comics's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*; the *Vampir Collection* theater card set (which includes a subset reprinting his covers to Innovation's *Vampire Lestat* mini-series) and sculpture for High Heels Productions; and a six-card subset to Topps's *Vampirella* trading cards.

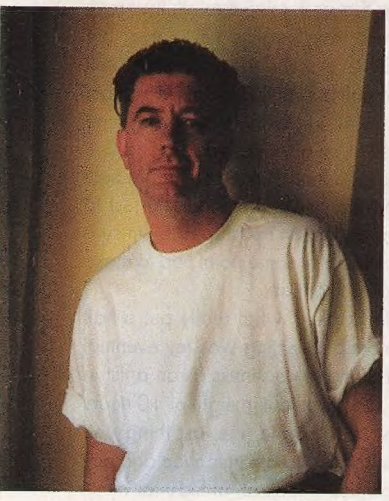

Photo by Liliana Bolton

"*Dragon Moon*, which I did with [writer] Christopher Claremont, will be in the shops any moment. Dark Horse Comics is going to reprint *The Black Dragon* [which was originally a six-issue Epic Comics mini-series], and I'm designing the book. I'm also working on the *Aliens/Predator: The Deadliest of the Species* covers, [a wraparound cover to DC's movie adaptation of]*Tank Girl*, and *Man-Bat*."

Past projects include: Dark Horse's three-issue *Army of Darkness*, DC's *The Books of Magic* mini-series #1, Epic's *The Black Dragon*, *Marada the She-Wolf*, and the graphic novel *Someplace Strange*.

Born and currently residing in London, England, the "eternally 23-year-old" 43-year-old artist cites surrealist painter Salvador Dali as an early influence, but "I didn't grow up reading Jack Kirby, so none of my work was influenced by him." These days, though, "my life seems to be revolving around anything but comics," he notes.

Bolton fell in love with comics while attending East End Technical College, when a girl gave a slide show about comics, and projected Silver Surfer and a number of other characters onto a wall.

"Seeing the images that size, comics ceased to be something I'd seen as just for kids. Up to that point—I was about 19—I'd thought I'd outgrown comics. But I started to see comics as art. Then, I discovered *Conan*, by Barry Windsor-Smith, and was hooked.

"What I bring into comics is influenced by a good idea or good art, or contemporary dance, or the cinema, or music," he explains, "and I'd rather it be like that than to be influenced by comics, and then just regurgitate material."

The future doesn't concern Bolton much, but wherever he goes, you can be certain that comics will play a part. "There is a need in me to tell stories; it's something I have to do. My life has to be peppered with covers and various projects. I could never see myself not telling a story, or not working in comics. I don't know where I'd be without comics."

First comic book read...
Our Army At War, by [Joe] Kubert.

Favorite comic of all time...
Anything by Frank Miller.

Favorite work of your own...
Every time I start a project, I try to give it its own style and approach. *Army of Darkness* was some of my best work, but each project contains some of my best work. Each book is my favorite.

Person you'd most like to meet...
Madonna. I'd like to get her to pose for me.

Most embarrassing moment...
When I was starting out, I showed Neal Adams my portfolio. My work wasn't in plastic sleeves—it was loose in the case—and when I walked away it spilled all over the floor.

Superpower you'd most like to have...
To paint better, faster, and get a year's work done in six months.

If you had the power of the Beyonder...
Um, paint better, faster, and get a year's work done in six months. What's a Beyonder?

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Emmenthaler cheese [a kind of Swiss cheese] and a banana, because bananas induce nightmares, and I find nightmares a great source of inspiration.

Things you collect...
Skulls. I even have a human skull; it was a birthday present from my wife, Liliana.

Favorite pastime or hobby...
I make furniture and sculpture, but the sculpture is often work-related. The furniture isn't comics-related; I just sit on it.

Costume you wore the last time you went trick-or-treating...
I wasn't dressed as anything specific; I was just trying to disturb as many people as possible. I wore a black evening suit and two masks. One was an old grinning ghoul with yellow teeth and blue eye shadow. Over that, I wore a modern transparent mask. No one knew who I was; it was like being invisible.

Last good movie you saw...
Pulp Fiction.

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Someone told me I looked like David Bowie, so I guess Bowie. Or Tom Cruise (just to boost the royalties).

Favorite cartoon...
Fantasia, which got me into classical music, or anything by Tex Avery.

Why do you read *Wizard*?
Because there is a great deal of respect in the industry for *Wizard*. ☆

Caryn Delacroix & Predator ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.

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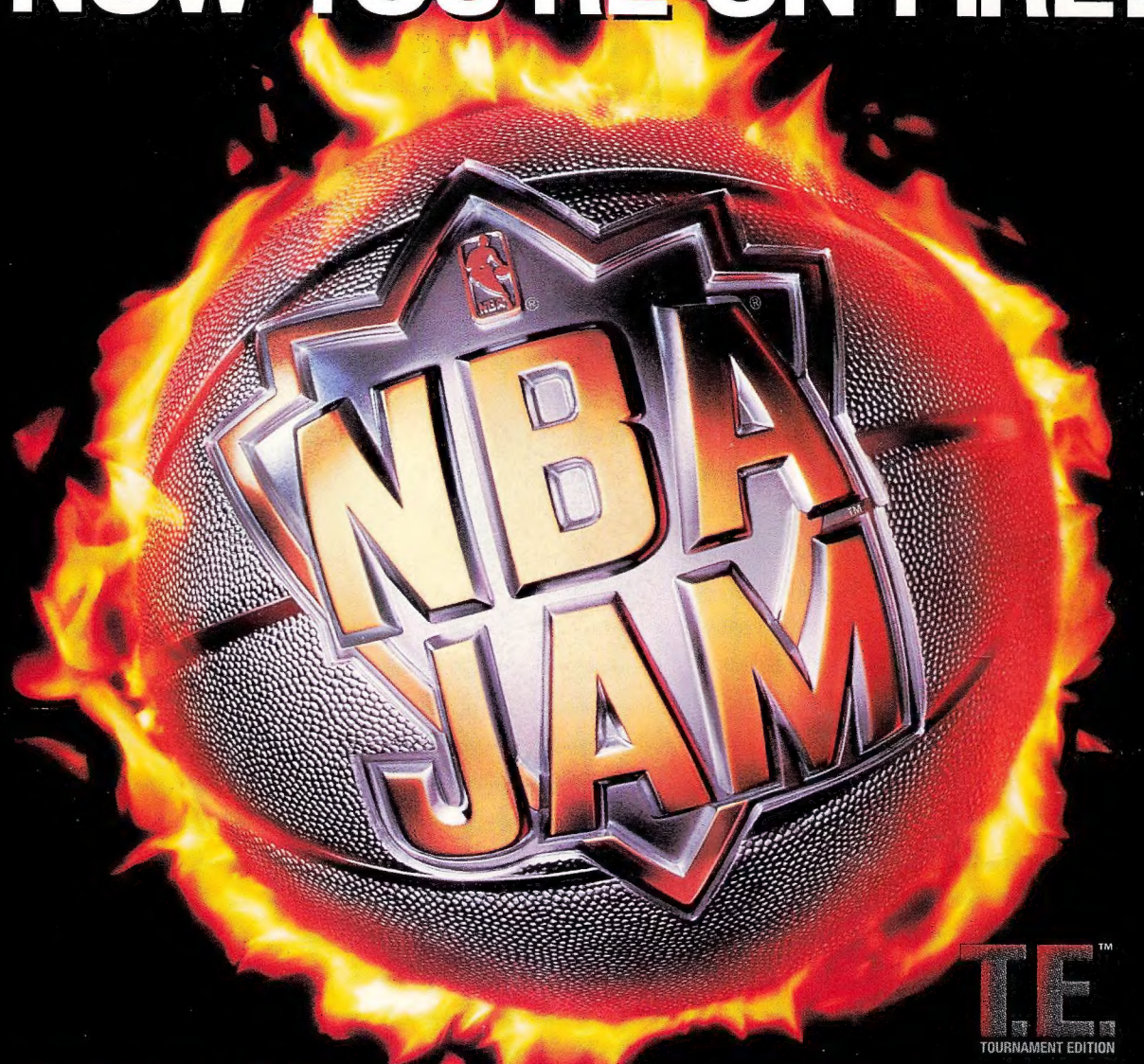

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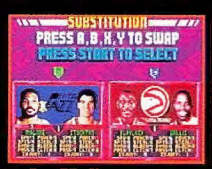

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